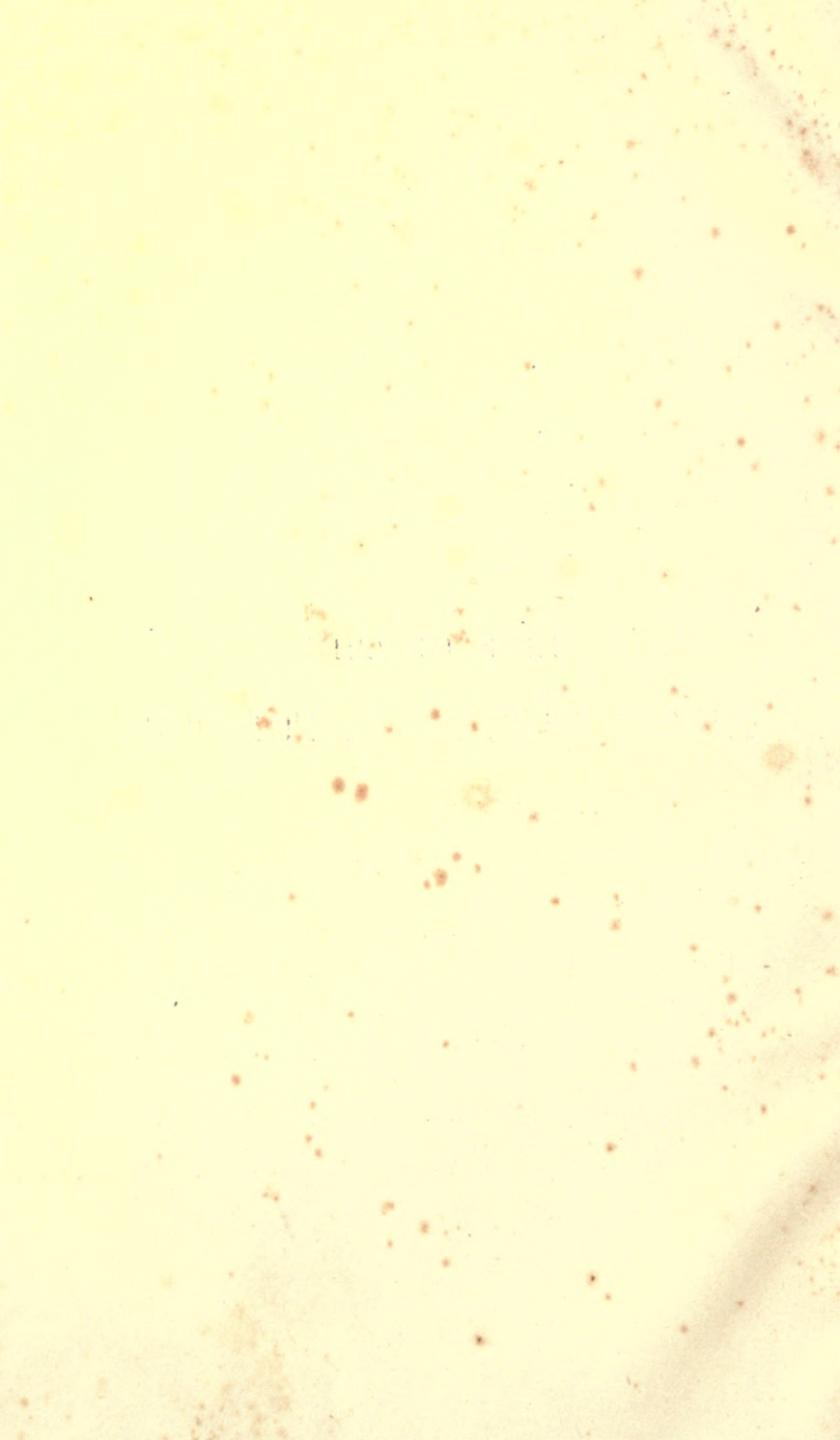


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LIFE OF THE
RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.





WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER.

1880.

(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY G. APPLETON AND CO., BRADFORD.)

L I F E

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER

BY

T. WEMYSS REID.

FIFTH THOUSAND.

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1889.

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LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.



CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

“HE was a man upon whom there could be no doubt that Nature had laid her hand for the purpose of forming a thoroughly genuine and independent character.” It was of Mr. Forster that these words were used in the House of Commons by Mr. Gladstone, on the evening of April 6, 1886; and it is the desire of his biographer to show that they were no less true than generous. Genuine and independent Mr. Forster undoubtedly was, as all who follow the story told in these pages will be constrained to admit. There are special reasons why the progress of his career should be narrated with some detail. No public man of his time suffered more seriously from a misconception of his motives and actions than he did. It was his fortune to find himself exposed to grave suspicions on the part of those with whom his political sympathies were closest, and more than once it seemed as though fate itself had determined that he should find his most bitter opponents in the ranks of his own friends. His striking and vigorous personality, his characteristics of speech and manner, whilst they undoubtedly served to attract to him in no ordinary degree the attention of the world, and to make his figure a commanding one upon the stage of public life, seemed also to be a source of irritation and anger to not a few, and he was judged harshly in many quarters because of qualities which, one might well have supposed, would have been cherished as virtues. The answer to his critics is to be found, not in any *apologia* offered for him by his friends, but in the plain and unvarnished story of his life as it was lived from day to day,

in the seclusion of his own home, and in the full glare of that publicity to which every English politician is compelled to submit. When that story has been told, it will be found to be one that is rich in lessons for all who are capable of learning from a striking and noble example. It is a story which shows how, without great birth, without wealth, and without any special educational advantages, a young Englishman of the middle class, was enabled to rise to one of the foremost positions in the nation, and to enjoy that greatest of all the rewards of a life of labour, the consciousness of having been able in some measure to secure for his fellow-countrymen the realization of the dreams of his ardent youth.

My desire is to tell this story, so far as may be, in Mr. Forster's own words—in the letters which he addressed to his family and friends, in the diaries which he kept from day to day for a great part of his life. These records speak far more clearly and truthfully than any narrative, however artistic, could do, of the character of the man himself; and I cannot but believe that in these pages, those of my readers who in days of strong party prejudice may have formed unfavourable opinions regarding the action of Mr. Forster, will find abundant reasons for the reconsideration and reversal of their verdict. They will find, at all events, that what he was in his youth and his early manhood, he remained to the end. Those who knew him intimately in his last days, can recall the enthusiasm which still animated him in his dealings with the great problems of life, the quickness of his sympathy with all who came to tell him of noble ideals, even though these ideals lay far beyond the range of practical politics, the tenacity with which he clung to the belief that a man may, if he strives to do his duty, leave the world somewhat better than he found it. The parable of the talents seemed to be that which had the greatest influence upon him, so far as the practical affairs of life were concerned. To use his powers to the best advantage, to make them yield the richest return for the benefit of those around him, was a duty which in his eyes was paramount. He had wonderful vitality and energy, and that real love of work without which no man can hope to make an abiding impression upon the world. These qualities sometimes displayed themselves in an aggressive form, which irritated those who did not understand the warmth of his enthusiasm and the strength of his convictions. But those who knew him best, those who either in public or in private affairs were brought into the closest contact with him, never misjudged him upon this point, or mistook for a mere love of

self-assertion, his eagerness to play his part in every field of labour in which he felt that he had a duty to perform.

I have spoken of those who judged him, at certain periods of his career, unfavourably; but I cannot forget that if he had to face, from time to time, heavy storms of unpopularity, he had an abundant compensation in the affection which he drew towards himself from the hearts of millions of his fellow-countrymen, who knew him only in his public life, and in the warmth of the love which was felt for him by a circle of friends which embraced almost every class and order in society, and which represented almost every variety of political and religious creed. Next to one great Englishman, who still survives, Mr. Forster seemed to have to the largest degree among politicians of his time, the element of a strong personality. Some people might be repelled by him; but others loved him. The one feeling that never seemed to exist where he was concerned was neutrality. The secret of this great force of personal magnetism—attracting or repelling, as the case may be—is to be found in those words used by Mr. Gladstone which I have already quoted. It is only the genuine and independent character which by itself, and apart altogether from the position in which it is found, or the work with which it is associated, strikes the imagination of the public. Those who loved Mr. Forster during his lifetime, those who had confidence in him as a man and a statesman, will not, I feel sure, be disappointed with that fuller revelation of his character which will be found in the documents cited in these pages. They will recognize, even in the story of his boyhood, the germ of those great characteristics which aroused their admiration in his manhood, and they will also, I think, find in the circumstances of his early life the key to some of those external features of mind and manner for which they may have been unable to account whilst he was still living; and, foremost among the great influences which made him what he was, must be reckoned his association by birth and training with the Society of Friends.

William Edward Forster was born at Bradpole, Dorsetshire, on the 11th of July, 1818. His father, William Forster by name, was a man whose remarkable career has gained for him a high place in the annals of the Society of Friends. He was the son of another William Forster, a land agent and surveyor, settled at Tottenham, in the latter half of the last century. Of the origin of the Forster family comparatively little is known. There is, however, reason to believe that at the close of the seventeenth century they were settled at Chester-le-Street, in the county of Durham. There at all events was born, about

the year 1690, a Josiah Forster, who took up his abode in London, as teacher of the Friends' School, in Clerkenwell, about the year 1710. This Josiah Forster, of whose character excellent accounts are to be found in the records of the society to which he belonged, does not seem to have led a very prosperous life. He was twice married; his second wife being Jane Birkbeck, of Settle, in Yorkshire. After his second marriage, he joined his brothers-in-law, the Birkbecks, in business, but speedily returned to his profession of teaching, first in Birmingham, and subsequently at Tottenham, where he settled in 1752, and where for more than a century the Forster family were resident.

It would be beside my purpose to follow up the shadowy traces which are left of the early Forsters. A brother of this Josiah Forster went to America, accompanied by his wife, about the year 1720, and a quaint letter written by him to his brother in England is still preserved. In this letter he says—

“The same day on which I had thy last, I found both Nathan Hands and William Ladd. William Ladd is at Elizabeth Whartenby's, a public Friend, late of Philadelphia, from London. I asked her for him. She directed me upstairs, where I found him in bed in a sort of sleep. My salutation was, ‘William, how art thou?’ At first he heard my voice, and, surprised, he said, ‘Josiah Forster, when camest thou hither?’ I replied, ‘I am not Josiah; I wish I were with him.’ ‘Sure thou art?’ saith he; ‘thou hast his very voice, his countenance, stature, and deportment. I can see no difference, only thou hast thy own hair and he a little brown wig.’ ‘I am his own brother,’ said I, ‘and my name is Reuben Forster. I live in this city, and I have a letter from him to-day, in which he desired me to inquire for thee and let him know how thou dost.’ ‘Alas!’ said he, ‘I have been three days in a burning fever,’ etc., etc., which he thinks is the effect of an old fall from a horse, and has rendered him incapable to endure any hard slavery without prejudice.”

There are some other documents in existence bearing upon the characteristics rather than the fortunes of the family. The one fact clearly established is, that so far back as their history can be traced, the Forsters were among the earliest followers of George Fox, furnishing the Society of Friends with ministers and teachers of both sexes, and taking an active part in the philanthropic labours with which from the days of its founder downwards that body has been honourably associated.

William Forster, the son of the Tottenham land agent and

the grandson of Josiah, was the second of a family of eleven children, and was intended by his father to follow his own profession. A very different fate, however, was in store for him; and in spite of many natural disadvantages, he was destined to become one of the most distinguished and successful ministers of the religious body to which he belonged, crowning his remarkable life of apostolic devotion and self-sacrifice with a martyr's death whilst on an anti-slavery mission in the United States of America.

He is described as a man "of a large and somewhat heavy frame, which seemed little fitted for bodily activity; a gait and manner which bespoke one who rather shunned than courted notice; a head and forehead of such capacity as to suggest the idea of considerable mental power; an eye full of quiet intelligence and quick observation; a mouth indicative of gentleness and kindness; and altogether a countenance in which the pleasing and attractive expression of the features amply compensated for any lack of grace and beauty in their form."

Not a few of those who after the death of William Forster bore public testimony to his labours and his virtues, dwelt upon the fact that he suffered from one distressing hindrance to active exertion. This was a strange mental and physical lethargy which at times enveloped him as it were in the benumbing embrace of a thick cloud, dulling his intellectual faculties, paralyzing his will, and rendering him incapable for the moment of any severe effort of mind or body. Yet, though always bearing about with him this "thorn in the flesh," William Forster was enabled, in spite of his natural infirmity, to accomplish more than most men in the allotted span of human life. Whilst still a youth, and at the time when he was studying the business of land surveying, he came under a sense of deep religious conviction. In the words of one of the testimonies borne to his character by the Society of Friends, he had, in his seventeenth year, "A remarkable visitation of the heavenly love, when he was led to review the years of his past life, and to contemplate with deep feeling the sinfulness of sin, and the holiness of God." It was whilst he was under the influence of "these precious and humbling feelings," that he formed the decision which influenced his whole future life. The Society of Friends depend for their ministrations upon the voluntary labours of men and women who have felt themselves called directly by the voice of God to the work of the ministry. No earthly reward falls to the lot of even the most successful of the preachers and ministers of the society. One

of the fundamental tenets of their body is that all service rendered as unto the Lord must be rendered without hope of any recompense in this world, save that which may come from the humble consciousness of a diligent and faithful performance of an appointed task. It follows that there is little need to guard the ministry of the Society of Friends from the intrusions of hypocrites and self-seekers. The society at all events calls for no qualification on the part of a minister, save the conviction that the Spirit, in whose influence they place so implicit a trust, has called the volunteer to the work to which he aspires.

It was this conviction which filled the heart of William Forster whilst still in his youth, and which led him to abandon all thought of temporal advancement and worldly prosperity, in order that he might render obedience to the voice which he had heard calling him to the service of God and of the oppressed and suffering among his fellow-men, as one of the ministers of the Society of Friends. Afflicted by that curious lethargy which at times weighed alike upon his mental and his physical faculties, and oppressed by a nervous shyness which rendered him altogether incapable of shining in ordinary society, it might have been supposed that William Forster was singularly unfitted for the task to which he had felt himself called. But the spiritual fervour of the man, the purity, simplicity, and tenderness of his nature, and his childlike trust in the leadings of Providence, enabled him to enter fearlessly upon the work of the ministry whilst still very young. It was in the summer of 1803, when in the twentieth year of his age, that he first ventured to speak in public at a meeting of the society, and two years later we find his name recorded among the recognized ministers of the Friends.

William Forster's "Life" has been written in two large octavo volumes, devoted to a record of the religious ministrations in which for more than fifty years he was almost constantly engaged, and to his own account of those spiritual meditations in which the simple Quaker preacher attained to heights of holy fervour and to glimpses of the mysteries of the Divine love worthy of St. Augustine himself. But the book is a disappointing one, inasmuch as it leaves out of view the human side of the character of this admirable man. We see his zeal in the work of the ministry, we are called upon to peruse his own outpourings of faith and love; but we get no distinct picture of the man himself, or of his relations with his family and his friends. Happily, enough is known from his own letters, and from the testimony of those around him, to

show that whilst devoted to the service of God and of the poor, he had the deepest love for his own kindred, and above all for his son, with whom his relations throughout life were of a peculiarly frank and tender character. Father and son were bound together indeed by ties of almost brotherly confidence and affection, the beautiful modesty, which was at all times one of William Forster's distinguishing characteristics, leading him in converse with his son to put aside all those airs of superior wisdom and kindly patronage which are usually to be found in the bearing of even the most devoted parents towards their offspring.

It was in 1805 that he began his regular public ministrations. The tall clumsily-formed youth, with the somewhat heavy countenance and the lethargic temperament, did not seem likely to secure command of the unemotional audiences gathered together in the simple meeting-rooms of the society. But it was soon found that, so far as his powers as a preacher were concerned, all outward appearances were deceptive. When, moved by the Spirit, he rose to address a congregation, all his natural shyness and timidity disappeared along with his consciousness of self; he seemed to speak as though under the influence of direct communion with God, and he moved those who heard him to novel transports of pious rapture. "It seemed," says one who knew him well, describing one of his discourses, "as if we might all have been his children gathered around him in his own parlour, his words were so full of persuasive love;" and another records how, when he stood in the "minister's gallery" at the meeting-house, addressing those before him, "his countenance was almost heavenly," beaming with an inner light that seemed absolutely to transfigure the homely features. His voice was one of peculiar pathos, so that when it was heard giving utterance in the slow and measured tones which are considered appropriate in the preaching of the Word among the Friends, to tender appeals to the consciences of sinners, and fervent praises of the Divine love, it vibrated in the hearts of his hearers, and brought tears to the eyes of old and young. How great was the impression which he made upon those who heard his preaching, may be estimated from the fact that when his son went into business in Bradford, in 1842, he found old people there who delighted to recall the memory of sermons preached by William Forster thirty years before.

The Divine love for man was his favourite theme in preaching. It was to the tenderness and long-suffering of the Father rather than to the wrath of the justly offended Deity,

that he sought to draw the attention of those whom he addressed. But he was not one of those preachers whose charity begins and ends in the pulpit or the "minister's gallery." Very early in his career his powers as preacher and teacher were recognized in his own body, and he became popular with the Friends, as popularity goes in that undemonstrative society. But almost from the first his preaching was closely associated with active labours on behalf of the poor and the oppressed of every race and creed. The good man's interest in the question of slavery began almost in his childhood, and to him belonged the credit of having first inspired Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton with zeal in the cause of abolition. But the Friends as a body were filled with hatred of that system which Wesley had described as "the sum of all villainy," and it was natural, and indeed inevitable, that one of their ministers should be urgent in protesting against it. William Forster, however, found other and more novel methods of showing that he loved his fellow-men even as he loved his God. It was a visit paid by himself and by Stephen Grellet, another eminent minister of the Friends, to Newgate, which led to the introduction of Elizabeth Fry to the scene of her future labours. Prisons and prisoners were, indeed, throughout his life objects of his close attention. Even the "organ grinders" of the streets, who found themselves poverty-stricken exiles in a strange land, had in him a steady friend, and long before the institution known as the Church and Stage Guild had been dreamed of, he had found his way into the society of actors, actresses, and the humbler hangers-on of the theatre, intent upon his Master's business.

Almost from the beginning of his ministry he began to distinguish himself by the number and the success of the "missions" or preaching journeys which he undertook to different parts of the country. From the paternal home at Tottenham he went forth again and again, on journeys among the Friends throughout England, visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing, strengthening those who were weak in the faith, exhorting the unpenitent, and confirming the saints. And when on these journeys—which in the beginning of the present century were really serious undertakings—it is recorded that the inertia from which he suffered during his intervals of abstention from work entirely disappeared. He was resolute, clear-sighted, and active, overcoming even the physical indisposition to severe exertion, which was due to his unwieldiness of body. He would travel without resting for days and nights at a stretch, would cheerfully encounter the

fatigues and perils of the road, and would devote every spare moment to the prosecution of his work. The fame of his ministrations spread throughout the society, and about the time when our fathers were watching the gathering of the allied forces for the final struggle at Waterloo, there was hardly any part of the three kingdoms in which "the people called Friends" had not enjoyed the opportunity of listening to William Forster, as he set forth to them the unfathomable mysteries of the Divine love, and dwelt upon the fallen state of man.

It is not necessary that I should give any detailed account of the young preacher's journeyings. It may be noted, however, that in 1812 he visited Scotland and the Hebrides, and that in 1813 he first saw the country which was afterwards to be the scene of some of his most heroic labours, and with whose history the name of his son must always be associated. From that time forward Ireland always seemed to have a special place in his affections and his prayers. Honourably known and warmly esteemed by the members of the society, he was a welcome guest wherever a Friend dwelt. Though without wealth, his poverty was regarded by the society as in every way honourable, inasmuch as it was voluntarily endured as a sacrifice to the cause to which he had devoted himself. Among the families with which in the course of his ministry he became intimate, were two of special prominence—those of the Gurneys, of Norwich, and the Fowell Buxtons, of Colne. In the first-named family he found a congenial friend, who was as a brother to him throughout his life, in the person of Joseph John Gurney, of Earlham. From the family of the Buxtons he received his chief earthly treasure, the wife whose character was the fitting counterpart and complement of his own.

Whilst the century was only entering on its teens, a religious revival of a striking character had taken place among the Society of Friends. There is some reason for associating this accession of spiritual fervour with the efforts of two men, Stephen Grellet, of whom mention has already been made, and William Forster. The preaching of the latter had always had a great charm for the young, the tender fervour of his appeals going straight home to the youthful heart, and wherever he went on his mission of love, the result was seen in a great growth of religious enthusiasm among the younger members of the society. Among many young people who at this time were led to take a deep interest in spiritual and philanthropic work, was a little band of both sexes, whose families occupied

a higher social position than that commonly held by the members of the society. Among these were Elizabeth Fry, who afterwards gained so honourable a place in the records of English philanthropy; her sister, Priscilla Gurney; and her brothers, Samuel and Joseph John Gurney; Hannah C. Gurney (afterwards Buxton); Maria Barclay (afterwards Fox); and last but not least, Anna Buxton, destined to become the wife of William, and the mother of William Edward Forster.

Even the records of the Quakers have their annals of romance, and the story of Anna Buxton may fairly claim a place among them. Among that little band of ardent disciples of which I have spoken she was peculiarly beloved. Beautiful in face and handsome in figure, she was yet more attractive from the brightness and sweetness of her spirit, the grace and vivacity of her manner. The family of Buxton was settled in Suffolk so far back as the middle of the sixteenth century. Early in the seventeenth century, William Buxton, the ancestor of Anna, died at Coggeshall, in Essex, and at Earls Colne, in that county, the family was residing towards the close of the last century. Isaac Buxton, Anna's grandfather, had married Sarah Fowell, the heiress of the Fowells of Fowelseombe, in Devonshire, and their son, the first Thomas Fowell Buxton, became in his turn the husband of Anna, daughter of Osgood Hanbury, of Holfield Grange, Essex. Their eldest child was Anna, afterwards the wife of William Forster, their second child being Thomas Fowell Buxton, the well-known philanthropist and member of Parliament, upon whom a baronetcy was conferred in the early years of the Queen's reign.

The family were the possessors both of wealth and station, the first Thomas Fowell Buxton having been High Sheriff of Essex, and a prominent figure in the society of the county. Both he and his wife were remarkable for other characteristics, however. At the time when he served in the office of High Sheriff, his attention was drawn to the miserable state of the prisons of the county, and he visited them all regularly for the purpose of alleviating the miseries of the prisoners, undeterred by the fear of gaol fever, which in those days was rampant in all the prisons of England. Thomas Fowell Buxton was a member of the Church of England. His wife was a Friend. It is recorded of her that she made no attempt to draw her children into that society to which she herself belonged. "She was more anxious to give them a deep regard for the Holy Scriptures, and a lofty moral standard, than to quicken their zeal about the distinctive differences of religious opinions." Nevertheless, or perhaps one ought to say, as the direct result,

of this system of non-interference, the whole of her family manifested throughout their lives a warm sympathy with the religious life and philanthropic work of the Friends, and her eldest child, Anna, became, whilst still young, a member of the society, and one of its recognized ministers. Mr. Buxton died at Earls Colne, in 1792. His wife, who subsequently married Mr. Edmund Henning, survived him for many years. It is interesting, in view of the career of her grandson, to read her son's description of her character. "My mother," he says, "was a woman of a very vigorous mind, and possessing many of the generous virtues in a very high degree. She was large-minded about everything; disinterested almost to an excess; careless of difficulty, labour, danger, or expense, in the prosecution of any great object. She had a masculine understanding, great power of mind, real vigour, and was very fearless. With these nobler qualities were united some of the imperfections which belong to that species of ardent and resolute character."

Anna and her young brothers and sister were brought up by their mother after the early death of their father. Their holidays were often passed at the beautiful home of their grandmother near Weymouth, which was at that time the favourite summer resort of George III. The king and the royal family were frequent visitors at Belfield, the residence of Mrs. Buxton; and it is recorded that the grace and beauty of Anna attracted the kindly admiration of the venerable monarch. "Anna Buxton," says the biographer of William Forster, "was then a fine lovely girl of remarkably refined and elegant manners, and George III., for whom she never ceased to retain a sort of filial reverence and love, noticed her with much kindness and affability; while the unrestrained intercourse allowed her with the royal family, made her familiar with the incidents of their daily life." It must have seemed at that time that there was little chance of any bond of union being established between the graceful young girl, who moved among the rich and fashionable, and who enjoyed to the full the innocent gaieties of the circle to which she belonged, and the young Quaker preacher, who, if he had taken no vow of poverty, was still under orders in a service in which no worldly advancement could be hoped for, and whose whole life was a protest against the frivolities and self-indulgence of the class to which Anna Buxton belonged. Yet between the fashionable young girl and the grave, shy, nervous, and *unfashionable* Quaker preacher, unknown to either, there were even then some bonds of sympathy. Of both of them it is on record that they had, even in their early years, a

singular degree of sensitiveness on the subject of the animal creation. Neither of them could bear to have any part, either directly or indirectly, in the infliction of needless pain upon dumb creatures. To such an extent did Anna Buxton carry this tenderness of feeling, that throughout her life she refused to taste game or to touch any animals killed in sport.

Not only had William Forster and Anna Buxton this strong love for the animal creation in common; they were both very early in life interested in that great anti-slavery movement which absorbed so much of the generous sympathy of the English public sixty or seventy years ago. It has already been stated that to William Forster belonged the honour of having first drawn Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's attention to the question of slavery; but even before he knew William Forster, whilst he was still a mere child in fact, the eminent philanthropist, to use his own phrase, was "made to think" upon the subject by observing that his sister Anna refused to eat sugar because it was produced by the enforced industry of slaves. If, therefore, William Forster and Anna Buxton seemed at the outset of their lives to be separated widely by circumstances, it is clear that in their characters and their sympathies there was much in common between them.

By-and-by came that closer union which was the result of an agreement upon the gravest of all the questions that interest human souls—that of religion. "Continued intercourse with the fashionable world," we are told of Miss Buxton, "soon lost its power to charm; the ball-room and the dance, with the excitement of musical entertainments, yielded only a temporary gratification, and often left a sting of dissatisfaction behind." This was the period in which, in common with several of her young friends, she experienced that deep religious impression of which mention has been made. The death of a young cousin of hers, to whom she was warmly attached, strengthened her determination to abandon the fashionable world, and she sought for and obtained admission to the Society of Friends. Allied through the marriage of her brother with the Gurneys of Earlham, she was now naturally brought into contact with the young minister. He was a frequent visitor to Norwich, and in Joseph John Gurney he had found a congenial soul. Mr. Gurney was a young man of wealth, his family being one of great influence, not merely at Norwich, but in the city of London, where their name was long a tower of strength. He had, however, a higher claim upon the affection of William Forster, for he was a man of great intellectual power and of intense spirituality. The letters which passed between the

two friends down to the moment of their separation by death, were animated by a spirit of something more than brotherly love. The two, it is evident, were knit together in a bond of no ordinary kind, from the moment when they first met, during one of Forster's visits to Norwich on a religious mission. Anna Buxton was not a woman who could play a merely passive part in her new character as a member of the Society of Friends. With characteristic energy she entered into the religious and philanthropic work of the society, and before long she became the active assistant, not only of her kinsman, Joseph John Gurney, but of William Forster, in their benevolent labours. When her intimate friendship with the latter began does not appear. But about the year 1812, we read that Stephen Grellet and William Forster, being engaged on a mission in the London prisons, were appalled by the scenes witnessed on the women's side in Newgate, and resolved to take immediate steps to interest Christian women in the fate of their fallen sisters. They accordingly made application to two ladies who were members of the society, and induced them to enter upon a work the beginning of which marked a new departure in the story of woman's mission in the world. One of these pious women was Elizabeth Fry, and the other was Anna Buxton. From that time forward William Forster and Anna Buxton were closely united in self-denying labours for the benefit of their fellow-creatures; and it was with the full approval of all their friends that in October, 1816, they were united in marriage. Before that time the bride had, like her husband, been fully recognized as a minister of the society.

The home to which William Forster took his wife was in the little village of Bradpole, Dorsetshire.

Bradpole may be described as an outlying hamlet, connected with the better-known Bridport, a small fishing town upon the coast. The situation is strikingly beautiful. Placed in the midst of the great range of the Dorsetshire downs, it is sheltered by the hills from the rough northern and western winds; whilst looking down the valley on the sides of which the hamlet has been built, a stretch of the sea is visible in the distance. Mr. Thomas Hardy has made the peculiar scenery of Dorsetshire familiar to the readers of his novels. Although characteristically English, it still presents a marked contrast to the scenery of most other English counties. The rich verdure of the treeless downs, which spread in swelling billows far as the eye can reach; the densely wooded valleys upon which the traveller across the grassy upland comes almost unawares; the great orchards, bearing their luxuriant crop of

apples, and the streams stealing in secret to the sea at the bottom of some narrow cleft in the moors, the favourite home of fern and primrose, make up a striking picture, the special features of which are to be found in few other parts of England.

It was in a detached house of modest appearance, in the outskirts of Bradpole, that William and Anna Forster took up their abode immediately after their marriage. The house, which is really little more than a cottage, still stands unaltered in its main features, save by the substitution of a roof of slate for one of thatch. The high-road runs past the garden gate, whilst the other side of the little plot of ground—half orchard, half flower-garden—is bounded by a rivulet, the musical ripple of which may be heard within the cottage walls. Here the Forsters spent nearly twenty years of their married life, and here their son was born. Writing at the time of his marriage to a friend, William Forster thus described his new home:—

“I must now introduce thee in imagination to our little dwelling. In the first place fancy thyself on the road from Bridport to Beauminster; and about a mile out of town, turn down to the right into a pleasant scattered village, and passing through two or three short lanes, the road neither good nor very bad, thou wilt arrive at our door. Our cottage is a plain-built stone house, thatched roof, and casement windows; one end comes to the footpath alongside the road. In front we have a neat forecourt; at the back a small orchard, and at the other end I hope to make a good garden. There are two parlours; one of them a neat, snug room, not very large; the other, I think, may be improved and made very habitable. There is a small light room for a store closet, and a comfortable kitchen. There are four lodging-rooms on the second floor—I think of converting one of them into a sitting room—and we have also good garrets. The only objection is the distance of a mile and a half from meeting.”

In this modest home, husband and wife settled down to a life of quiet happiness, the foundation of which was their mutual devotion to the work to which both had felt themselves to be called. Poverty of the sordid kind was not permitted to enter their doors, and yet they were very poor, only being able to make both ends meet by the exercise of a rigid economy and self-denial, faced with equal courage and contentment by both. Both were very fond of flowers—the wife’s preference being, however, for the simple wildflowers of the wayside—and very soon the garden attached to their little house began to assume an appearance which bore testimony to the taste of its owners. It was not, however, in

the adornment of their cottage home, and in the cultivation of their innocent natural tastes that the newly married couple found their chief delight. "All our dear friends," he writes to Joseph John Gurney, "seem to fancy us very happy in our little cottage, and rich in the enjoyment of each other's company; and truly they are not mistaken. Our comforts are almost without alloy." He goes on, however, to explain wherein he and his wife found their chief cause for satisfaction. "On our first coming here, I was a little uneasy at being without an object of outward pursuit and attention (though I must say, and thou wilt believe me, that in every possible way to increase the comfort and enjoyment of a dear and most affectionate wife, is a duty and pleasure of all others most satisfying and delightful to me); but I already feel there was not much need of this anxiety. There is enough for us to do. Our poor neighbours are in the extreme of indigence; and there seems scarcely any one to care for their wants, which it will be our privilege and great enjoyment in some degree to alleviate." So William Forster had the happiness of knowing that even in the seclusion of his humble village home, he was in the midst of the work most congenial to his tender and generous soul.

A year of uneventful peace succeeded their marriage. Yet even then there was vaguely forming in his mind the scheme of a task of greater hardship and self-sacrifice than any he had heretofore undertaken. "There has been often," he writes to Elizabeth Fry, "a secret intimation to set my house in order, that I may be ready to obey the summons; but how hard will it be to leave my dearest companion in life, when I have all that I could wish to find in a wife!"

It was, however, not by the husband, but by the wife, that the first call to active service was heard. In the early part of 1818, Anna Forster "felt it to be her duty to unite with her cousin, Priscilla Gurney, in paying a religious visit to Friends in Ireland." She parted from her husband at Holyhead, whither he had escorted her, and in the company of Priscilla Gurney spent three months in evangelistic work in Ireland. One picture we have of her appearance in Ireland, and it is worthy of being reproduced here. It is from "The Annals of Ballitore," a work familiar to Friends. "Anna, the newly married wife of William Forster, paid a religious visit to the meetings of Friends in Ireland. She joined our society by conviction. Her rank in life was high, and she associated with the great. A few years ago she visited Ireland on a very different occasion—to attend the plays at Kilkenny.

Her person and manners are graceful. She is sister to that noteworthy successor of Howard, Thomas Fowell Buxton, and, like him, advocates the cause of the prisoner. Anna Forster's companion was Priscilla Gurney, daughter of John Gurney, of Norwich, and sister to Elizabeth Fry, whose name is dear to humanity, and whose efforts to reform the female prisoners in Newgate have been attended with wonderful success. Priscilla Gurney, though educated in our society, had also moved in high life, and her uncommon beauty made her most attractive. . . . The dedication of these fine young women, Anna Forster and Priscilla Gurney, who have resigned so much more of the pleasures and honours of this world than most have it in their power to do, affords a striking example; and the sweet serenity which seems to overshadow them, encourages others to follow these humble travellers in the path in which alone peace will be the companion of the way."

Of the result of Anna Forster's work in Ireland we have no actual record, though she herself expresses her grateful acknowledgments of the "many mercies" which she had experienced during her visit. Upon her son the memory of that journey, undertaken in simple faith and love by the mother whom he revered so tenderly, had throughout his life a great and abiding influence. It was the close of May when Mrs. Forster again reached her quiet home at Bradpole, after her Irish journey; and on the 11th of July following, her only child, William Edward Forster, was born.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL DAYS.

FOR some time after the birth of her son the health of Mrs. Forster was very delicate. The boy himself grew and prospered. The father writes in March, 1819, "Our dear boy is become very interesting to us, quite a companion, and very much our delight. I am thankful to say he is healthy, and comes forward much to our satisfaction. How much do I desire that this, the chief of our earthly blessings, may be sanctified to us; that we may be enabled rightly to fulfil every duty towards him, and that we may be favoured to see him walk acceptably before the Lord. Already I feel what it is to have a child born into this world of trouble and temptation. Sometimes, in my too fearful imagination, I anticipate his trials; and all the sympathies of my nature are awakened for him."

It might have been thought that, with a wife to whom he was tenderly devoted suffering seriously in health, and with the parental instinct thus awakening in its full force within his heart, this was not the time when William Forster would be likely to think of undertaking a great and arduous task, which would carry him to a distant part of the world, and separate him for years from those whom he loved. But, in his entire trust in the Divine wisdom, he never allowed his human affections to interfere with his implicit obedience to that which he believed to be a call of the Spirit. Amid much gloom and doubt and fear, he recognized the fact that it was his duty to go to America on a religious mission to the widely scattered Friends in the States. It was towards the close of 1818 that this conviction first took definite shape in his mind. For nearly a year he waited, in sore conflict of spirit, for the full assurance that he was in the right path. No one could have felt more strongly than he did the pain of the separation from his home and his wife and child, which the carrying out

of such a task involved. "Many are my trials of faith and my discouragements," he exclaims as the time draws nigh for setting out upon his errand, "and deep and heavy the conflict of natural affection and feeling. I need not tell thee how hard it is to look towards so long and distant a separation from my beloved and most loving and helpful wife, and our sweet little boy. It is indeed a bitter cup. . . . I wish to serve the Lord with cheerfulness and resignation; but, alas! the flesh is very weak: but may I never forget that, impossible as it seemed to me, with God all things are possible."

In the summer of 1819 this inner struggle in the good man's soul was ended, by the formal approval of his proposed mission by the yearly meeting of the society in London. It was not, however, until the spring of 1820 that he set out on his long journey, the interval being occupied by a series of farewell meetings with the Friends in different parts of England. His wife and her brother, Thomas Fowell Buxton, clearly recognized the fact that he had been called to his great task by the voice of duty; and, real as were the sufferings of the former in anticipation of the long separation from her husband, she forebore to utter a single word which might deter him from his pious work. "I have here," says Thomas Fowell Buxton, writing from Bradpole shortly before William Forster's departure, "a full opportunity of learning a lesson of humility. It is very well to do good and to serve one's country, while at the same moment we are feeding our ambition and gratifying our pride; but what are the sacrifices I make? I may call them sacrifices, but their true name is—the pleasures I enjoy. Here, however, the pleasures and the sacrifices are totally at variance. How truly and exactly do the words, 'They left all and followed Him,' convey my view of William's two years' absence from a home, a wife, a boy (not to mention the dear horse, and ducks, and flowers), the very darlings of his heart, all his wishes and desires centering in this spot! Well, I cannot pity him! I am more inclined to envy one who is wise enough to make a bargain so incontestably good."

On the 15th of April, 1820, William Forster embarked at Bristol for America, and it was not until June, 1825, that he was again permitted to stand on English soil. Very pathetic is the account of the parting scene, when his wife, his parents, his brothers, his friend, Joseph John Gurney, his fellow-labourer, Stephen Grellet, and others bade him farewell on the deck of the vessel. "It was a memorable occasion," writes Joseph John Gurney; "both William and his wife were

marvellously upheld." The latter, indeed, was enabled so far to rise above the sense of her own anguish, that in prayer in the cabin of the vessel, where some twenty friends were assembled, she "returned thanks for the prospect which was given her of William's safe voyage." There was "a look of joy and peace" on the husband's face as his friends on shore last saw him standing on the deck, whilst the beautiful ship slowly glided down the river. In the hearts of husband and wife there was the comforting sense of the Divine presence, the feeling that all sacrifices could be endured which were met in pursuit of the plain path of duty.

"My depths have been at times very deep," writes the wife in her first letter to her husband after the parting. "I have felt indeed; but I must reverently acknowledge that I have been greatly, unexpectedly supported and comforted again and again; and that in a way so sweet to my feelings. Sometimes I have felt such a cheerful calm, I could not doubt where it came from, and then such a lively sense at times that my dearest was only gone for a time, that he is coming back to me. . . . But though this has predominated above expectation, I have indeed had to drink a bitter cup. A very suffering path has this separation been to me, and must I not expect will often be. . . . Our darling boy is finely and truly lovely, so very affectionate in his manner, in such a sweet disposition this last day or two. He puts his hand out when I ask where dear papa is, and says 'Gone,' and when I asked if he loved thee, has answered me 'Yes.' . . . When we reached here, about half-past nine at night, I felt a tiny cheering support. Thou seemed almost at my side, my love. I have had confirmation on confirmation in this way (though at times so much affected, and may I not say, afflicted), that this is my right place. This will be to thy comfort, I know."

So far we may be permitted to intrude upon the sufferings of Anna Forster during this period of separation from her husband. Her natural courage and simple piety sustained her during the whole period of trial. She occupied herself not only with her child and her home, but with that work in the ministry to which she also was dedicated. Once, indeed, her heart almost failed her. It was in 1823, when she received unexpected intimation of the fact that her husband's absence was to be prolonged for two years beyond the period originally fixed. "Truly it has been as a heavy storm upon me," she says (January 9th, 1823); "but, my dearest, from this time write just as thou thinks to me in it, for I trust I can now bear it, and surely we love to have only one object as much

as possible. I think I have strength to encourage thee not to fear, my dearest, but to attend to all the leadings of thy gracious Lord. . . . Let me ask thee, and thou need not be afraid, I believe, of telling me, whether thou continues to have a prospect to the West Indies. The Lord will keep thee in safety through all, if so, I do believe. . . . I greatly feel for thee in going into Carolina on account of the slave trade, etc. I had hoped such suffering might be spared. . . . On third day morning, sweet Willy said, before it was quite light, 'What did thee cry for so last night? Will thee cry any more? Are thee crying now?' And he has seemed really to feel thy not coming home. Sometimes lately, before thy last letter came, he used to say, almost pettishly, 'I want papa to come home so.' Well, when I was dressing him on third day morning, I told him when dressed he should go down and warm himself. 'No, I shan't go down. I shan't leave thee when thee are so sorry.' . . . Dear child! he is very engaging, and I believe does really love thee."

William Forster, in the mean time, was pursuing, amid many hardships and some dangers, the work he had undertaken in the United States. The American Friends had recognized the noble qualities of the man, and though he had come amongst them as a stranger, they had quickly learned to love him. He travelled many thousands of miles through the Northern and Southern States, and spent some time both in Upper and Lower Canada. When in the South, his strong feeling on the subject of slavery was quickened by his observation of the hateful system on the spot; and even then, despite the gentleness and timidity of his character, he did not scruple to lift up his voice in open protest against the crime of which an entire race were the victims. The extract I have just given from one of his wife's letters, shows how resolutely he could resist the temptation to return to the home he had left with so much pain and difficulty, so long as he conceived that duty constrained him to labour in that distant field. But no mistake could be greater than that of attributing to William Forster any lack of tenderness towards wife and child. The pious father believed that he was called upon to forsake both, in order to follow the Master whom he served; but day by day his thoughts were fixed upon his English home, and every letter which he wrote bore testimony to the tender yearning of his heart towards those whom it sheltered. Amid all the hardships and difficulties of his five years' journeying, there were certain treasures to which he clung persistently. Among these was the first letter ever written

by his son, a child's simple note, which the father carefully preserved until the day of his death.

It was of this period of his childhood that Mr. Forster often, in after life, told with amusement a characteristic anecdote. He was travelling in a coach in the charge of his nurse, when a benevolent old gentleman began to talk to him. "Where is your papa, my dear?" said his fellow-passenger. "Papa is preaching in America," was the reply. "And where is your mamma?" continued the gentleman. "Mamma is preaching in Ireland," was the answer which the astonished stranger received.

In June, 1825, the long strain upon the hearts of husband and wife came to an end. The former landed on the 14th of that month, at Liverpool, where he found his wife awaiting him. They proceeded to his mother's house at Tottenham, where his "darling boy" was at that time staying, and after a brief sojourn there, the reunited family went down to Bradpole, to begin again that domestic life which the husband's call to America had so long interrupted. The boy now became the inseparable companion of his father. Tenderly as he loved his mother, William Edward Forster entertained an affection not less warm and tender for his father. An only child, born when his parents have passed their first youth, and brought up in the closest companionship with them, stands in a dangerous position. It may be that the son of William and Anna Forster did not pass completely unscathed through the ordeal of childhood; but if that be the case, the only traces of the fact which now exist are to be found in the old-fashioned gravity of his letters, and in the pronounced opinions which, whilst still a boy, he had formed upon many subjects on which boys seldom trouble themselves to think at all.

It must have been a sober and somewhat monotonous life which he led during those earliest years at Bradpole. The simplicity of the Quaker style of living was at all times characteristic of the ways of the little household, and no one can be surprised that a certain quaint formalism of manner and speech distinguished the boy, or that he learned to discuss grave social and political questions with his father and mother before he had learned to play with children of his own age. His mother's bright and vivacious temperament furnished a striking contrast to the serious disposition of his father, who was prone to take desponding views of life, and whose profound and unaffected sense of his own unworthiness must have had a somewhat depressing influence upon those who were nearest to him, and who knew and loved him best. It must not be

supposed, however, that the boy's life was without its natural pleasures, or that his parents were unable to sympathize with him in the ordinary pursuits of childhood. Their love of nature and of the animal creation was shared to the full by him, and in the garden and the beautiful country around Bradpole, he found inexhaustible sources of innocent amusement.

William Edward Forster learned to love the scenery of his native county with a passionate attachment, which only grew stronger with the passage of time. Throughout his life he was animated by a profound love for the grand and the beautiful in nature, and when the time came for him to fix the home of his manhood, the spot which he chose was one of the most picturesque in the most beautiful of all the valleys in Yorkshire. But even the beauties of Wharfedale, with its silvery stream, its grand moors, and its noble trees, never seemed to dim the strength of his affection for the "happy vale" of Bradpole, and the familiar outlines of Barrow's Hill, beneath the shadow of which his childhood was passed. To the last his eye would kindle, and his voice grow warm and deep, when Bradpole and the neighbouring downs and valleys were named in his presence.

His grandmother, the wife of Mr. Fowell Buxton, was now settled at Weymouth, with her second husband, Mr. Henning, and a letter of hers, written about the year 1825, is the earliest I can find addressed to the boy. As a quaint example of the moral discipline under which he was placed thus early, it is worth printing.

"Weymouth, Third Day.

"MY VERY DEAR WILLY,

"The very pretty books called 'Frank,' I have sent upon conditions as follows:—

"1st. Thou art to try to read this letter before the books are untied.

"2nd. Whenever thou art so far forgetful of thy duty as to let thy dear mother call thee or order thee more than once to do anything, thou art to tie up the books for one week for each offence, and beg Maria to write such offence or offences on the outside of the cover of the books, and the day of the month when they are tied up and when they are untied.

"3rd. Whenever thou art so forgetful of thy duty as to let Maria call thee or order thee more than once to do anything, thou art to tie up the books for three days for each offence, and beg Maria to write thy offence or offences on the outside

cover of the books, and the day of the month when they are tied up and when they are untied.

"4th. If I receive the covers of the books after thy having them three months, without any writing on the outside, I intend to allow thee to choose another book. . . . I remain, thy very

" Affectionate grandmother,
" A. HENNING."

The Maria referred to in this letter was a nurse to whom the child was devotedly attached. Under his mother he commenced his education whilst still very young, and it was not until 1828, when in his tenth year, that he began to receive regular lessons from Mr. Taylor, the perpetual curate of Bradpole, with whom he continued to read for two years. Among his earliest letters, all carefully preserved by those who saw in him with better reason than any founded on mere parental partiality, the promise of future distinction, is one written to his father during a visit which the boy paid to his grandmother Forster's house at Tottenham, in October, 1829.

"On third day I went to quarterly meeting, which I very much enjoyed. I saw Aunt Elizabeth Fry, who spoke very beautifully in the first meeting, but I could not speak to her, the women's meeting being so much shorter than the men's. Elizabeth Dudley, and two or three other women Friends spoke likewise. The second meeting was chiefly occupied with an appeal made by Thomas Sturge against Gracechurch Street meeting. . . . I saw Richard Philips in the meeting. He inquired particularly after both thee and mamma, and he said he loved you both, and for your sakes he would kiss me; and so he did kiss me in the meeting."

Delicate health to some extent interfered with the boy's studies, and occasioned anxiety to his parents and friends; but if at times he was unable to continue his lessons under Thomas Taylor, he was able to follow his own favourite pursuits, which were happily consistent with the development of body as well as mind. From a little diary which he kept with tolerable regularity in 1830 and 1831, we get an accurate picture of his occupations. Already he had fallen under the spell of that love of Nature which was so strong in him to the end. It is not often that boys of twelve are susceptible to the influence of fine scenery, but even at that age Forster was moved by the grandeur of the sea, and by the softer beauties of the hills and vales of Dorsetshire. Nor was his passion for

Nature confined to his admiration of fine scenery. He had learned to note the habits of bird and beast, and the favourite lurking-places of flowers. All through the boy's diaries are references to the first appearance of cuckoo or swallow, of wood sorrel or anemone. His parents had provided him with his one great luxury—a pony, whose duty it also was to carry his mother on her visits to Bridport for shopping purposes—and he rode much about the beautiful district around his home, gaining strength of body whilst he was filling his mind with those pictures of Dorsetshire scenery which he cherished with an undying affection to the latest hour of his life.

It must not be supposed, however, that the artless record of his life from his twelfth to his fourteenth year, which has been preserved for us, shows him only as a boy intent upon these innocent amusements. He was no infant prodigy; but even in those early days the true bent of his mind was clearly indicated. We find him recording the books which he has read—Constable's "History of Mary Queen of Scots," Bourrienne's "Life of Napoleon," the *North American Review* on "the Greek Revolution," and so forth—and putting down in his diary his own opinions on the subjects, and on the manner in which those subjects have been treated by the authors. Nor is it only with serious reading of this kind that his mind is engaged. He studies the newspapers regularly, and before he has completed his thirteenth year stands revealed to us as a budding politician, deeply interested in the battles of reform, and disposed to criticise the political achievements of the Duke of Wellington with the unfriendly impartiality of an *Edinburgh Reviewer*.

Juvenile productions such as this little diary, written in a sprawling boyish hand in a couple of thin memorandum books, can seldom be laid before strangers with edification; but one or two passages may be reproduced, because they show that even then some of these mental and moral characteristics which were most prominent in later life had made their appearance. What, for example, can be more characteristic than this account of a man who had excited his admiration by his public actions, written when he was twelve years of age:

"September 8, 1830.—We went to monthly meetings at Shaftesbury. We dined and slept at Sarah Mullet's, but I drank tea at John Rutter's, whom I like very much. There has lately been an election at Shaftesbury, in which he has been very much engaged. He is, I think, a complete picture of an independent, public-spirited man. Frank, noble, generous, and talented, he has by his abilities and exertions

been the chief and almost successful means of spiring up the people to a resistance of the immense influence of Lord —, whose agents have, by their harsh and tyrannical mode of procedure, strongly and deservedly excited the people against them. John Rutter has been blamed for rendering them more excited. But was he to be blamed for telling the truth and nothing but the truth; for exposing the practices of men who—as one instance out of many—have ordered every one of their tenants who have voted against them to be turned out of their houses in at least three months? Was he to be blamed because the lowest of the mob, who care not on whose side they are, have happened to commit excesses on his? Was he to be blamed because that by a few of the true words he had said he had further excited the people? No; John Rutter has done nothing but what every true-born Englishman ought to admire and applaud.”

Very juvenile, no doubt, this outburst in honour of the village Hampden of Shaftesbury, but striking, too, as showing that in the case of Mr. Forster also, the child was father of the man.

In November of this year, 1830, we find the boy discussing the political crisis and the change of government with the keen zest of a member of Brooks's Club. “The Duke of Wellington,” he remarks, “has effected two great measures, the Test and Corporation Act, and Catholic Emancipation, for which we must thank him. But as I do not think it likely he would have followed up the liberal course he had undertaken, and because I not only prefer Whiggism in the abstract to Toryism, and as it is to be hoped that the Whigs now in power will fulfil their three great promises, viz. the abolition of slavery, retrenchment, and moderate reform, I must confess that I am glad of the change.”

It would be easy to multiply these extracts from the diary. There is one passage in particular in which “the condition of England question” is discussed with remarkable spirit and boldness, and with an uncompromising sympathy with the poor, even though, under the pressure of their sufferings, they have been led to indulge in rick-burning and other forms of violence, which I am tempted to quote; but I have given enough to show that even then the boy took a strong interest in public affairs, and that in the society of the father and mother, whose idolized companion he was, he had learned to discuss the questions of the day with an eager interest and intelligence which were distinctly beyond his years. Some of his friends already, indeed, saw in him the promise of future distinction in the political world. In the diary of his kins-

woman, Anna Gurney,* of Northrepps Cottage, I find, under date of May, 1830, the following passage:—

“We have had a visit of much interest from our brother and sister, William and Anna Forster. Young William is a promising fellow. Truly may we rejoice in him. He is a boy of an aspiring nature, not unlike Harry. We asked him what he meant to be. ‘A lawyer. My father has given me a choice of two professions—medicine and law—but I shall take to the law, because in that line I may get into Parliament.’ To distinguish himself in Parliament is his present clear end and ambition, and his Uncle Buxton a model and pattern. We do heartily wish him to resemble his father and uncle on both sides. In our own case the promise of the future generation may well cheer us.”

The lady from whose journal this extract is made was destined in after-life to exercise not a slight influence over Mr. Forster’s character and career. She was a first cousin of Mrs. Forster and of Miss Sarah Buxton,† and she lived with the latter at Northrepps Cottage, not far from Northrepps Hall, the seat of Thomas Fowell Buxton. In the “Life of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton,” we are told how the cottage stood in a deep secluded dell, opening on the fishing village of Overstrand and the German Ocean. “The path to it from the hall lies through the woods, and thither Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton always turned his steps when his spirits needed to be enlivened, or his anxieties shared; well knowing that his presence would ever be hailed with eager delight.” In later years it was William Edward Forster who turned to “the Cottage ladies,” as they were familiarly called, for counsel and encouragement, and who invariably received from them the help he sought. They were indeed a remarkable couple, and it is to be regretted that no special effort has been made to preserve the story of their lives from oblivion. Sarah Buxton was an invalid, but she took the keenest interest in all the philanthropic works of her distinguished brother, and herself carried on many missions of mercy among the people around her. Anna Gurney, her “partner,” as they invariably termed each other, was a woman of great intellectual power, highly educated, and endowed with a resolution and strength of will which enabled her to face every difficulty with cheerful courage. Though a cripple, she was able even in those days, when railway trains were unknown, and continental inns were a terror even to hardy men, to travel far and wide through Europe, everywhere studying with care and keen insight the

* Died, 1857.

† Died, 1839.

social and political problems which presented themselves among the different peoples whom she was visiting. When living at home, in the secluded cottage at Northrepps, her lameness was no obstacle to an almost incessant activity, and to her personal superintendence of the domestic affairs of the humble fisher-folk who lived around her. She was the "Lady Bountiful" of Northrepps and its neighbourhood, aiding her neighbours not merely by her personal charity but by the sound sense which was always at the service of those who sought her advice. There was something masculine in her temperament; but it was allied with so genuine a goodness of heart, that no one ever felt her to be in the slightest degree unwomanly.

Among the many objects which enlisted her sympathy was the saving of life at sea. Wrecks were frequent on the exposed coast of Norfolk, and Anna Gurney was in the habit of directing the operations of the fishermen when they were engaged in rescuing the unfortunate crews of shipwrecked vessels. A graphic account is still extant in one of her letters of how news was brought to her one Christmas morning whilst she was attending service in church that a ship was off the coast in distress, and how at once she marched forth at the head of the whole congregation, and superintended the work of rescue, returning to church after having witnessed the landing of the imperilled crew, just in time to hear the benediction pronounced, and to announce the good news to the clergyman and clerk, who had been left to continue the service alone.

Her mind was richly stored with knowledge. She knew many languages—not only Latin and Greek and the modern languages which form the ordinary equipment of an educated woman—but Norsk and other northern tongues seldom acquired in those days by any save professed students. Like many other persons of active temperament who accomplish a great deal of practical work, she was able in the midst of her busy life of usefulness to continue her course of study. She was a great and omnivorous reader, a regular and voluminous correspondent. Not without a certain literary faculty, she edited for a number of years a little magazine called the *Fisherman's Friend*, in which frequently verses of her own composition appeared. Above all she was the *confidante* and friend of both young and old in the families with which she was allied, and she and her gentle and warm-hearted "partner" might almost be regarded as the central figures in the family group. "The Cottage," at all events, was a point towards which young and old were never tired of turning their steps

I have spoken at this length of the ladies of the Cottage, because both of them, but more especially Miss Gurney, had a distinct influence upon Mr. Forster's career during its most critical period.

At the time of that visit to the Cottage the record of which is preserved in Anna Gurney's diary, William Edward Forster had not even commenced his career as a schoolboy. He was under the not very regular tuition of Mr. Taylor, whose efforts to inform his mind were supplemented by occasional lessons in French from a French teacher who had taken up his abode at Bridport. In August, 1831, however, the home life came to an end. He was sent to school at Fishponds House, Bristol, an establishment conducted by one Joel Lean, a member of the Society of Friends. He remained there until the autumn of the following year. Mr. Lean's school was probably neither better nor worse than most private schools of that era. If the worthy Friend who conducted it erred at all, it was on the side of omniscience. He undertook not merely to give his pupils the "rudiments" of a polite education, but instruction in every known branch of literature and the sciences; and in less than six months from the young pupil's entrance upon his studies, his parents had been called upon to disburse the handsome sum of £14 8s. 2d. for the books with which he started upon his scholastic course. He had to work hard; the school hours, with brief intervals for meals, being from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. It does not appear that he really learned much during the sixteen months he spent at Fishponds House; but his school life did him good in many respects. It acted as a wholesome corrective of his comparatively lonely life at Bradpole, and in the company of boys of his own age, the only child began for the first time to feel his own way in the world. Happily, too, Fishponds House was surrounded by large grounds, in which he was enabled to indulge his love for flowers and birds. His letters to his parents, though thoroughly boyish, are written with unusual care and fulness for a young schoolboy, and with entire frankness about his school life and its occasional scrapes. Some specimens will show both the course of his life and the ardent affection with which he clung to his home and those in it.

"Bristol, 15th day, 8th mo., 1831.

"MY VERY, VERY DEAR MOTHER,

"I should have written thee before, only I really have not had time, else I longed very much to do it. I like school quite as well as might be expected, and expect to like

it more and more every day. The master seems to be a much more agreeable person than I thought he would be, and the mistress is very kind indeed."

"MY VERY, VERY DEAR PAPA AND MAMMA,

"I cannot say how much I am obliged to you for your letters. I had been rather low yesterday morning, being afraid I should not have a letter, but as soon as I had them they set me all to rights, they were so VERY kind. I like to have them on first day, because then I can read them over and over again, and almost learn them by heart without any interruption. I could read every word of mamma's letter, it was written so plain, so she need not be at all afraid of writing me very long ones. . . . I am in the first class in Greek with Edward Aikin and Alfred Hartland. I hope I shall be able to keep in it, but I am afraid I shall find it very difficult. I have not yet begun German, because my other lessons are not quite settled, when they are, I suppose I shall form a class with Gurney Fry in that and in Virgil.

"I remain your *very, very* affectionate son,

"W. E. FORSTER."

"Fishponds House, 29th day, 8th mo., 1831.

"I am sure I do not know what I should be able to do without your letters; I could keep every word of them, they are such a pleasure to me. I wish you would say how you are in every letter, for if you don't say I shall be always afraid there is something the matter. I have got a very good garden, which I mean to take great care of."

"Fishponds House, 19th, 9th mo., 1831.

". . . I have done with Lucian and I am now doing Plutarch's 'Apothegms.' I am to begin the 'Analecta Majora' as soon as I can get the book. I am half sorry, half glad, to hear that you are not going to have a contest; if I was at home I should certainly wish for one, but as I am not perhaps you may as well remain quiet."

The following letter shows a tenderness and power of sympathy which were certainly remarkable in a boy of thirteen.

"MY VERY, VERY DEAR FATHER,

"Thy letter has been a very great comfort to me. . . . The text, which I have found is the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians, I thought the first part was

particularly applicable to thee when thou art so low about thy own preaching, when I am sure there is no reason for it. Pray, my dear father, do consider, that if thy preaching has been of no other use (which I am sure it has been to many other people), it has been of very great use to me, and has tended more to my good than that of any other person that I have ever heard. I hope this will be some comfort to thee, and may encourage thee to think that thou art nearly of as much use to others as to me."

One of the great events of his stay at Fishponds was a walk to Tintern Abbey and back, which he took with the master and a number of his schoolfellows. It was a walk of about *thirty* miles, and he tells his parents with pride that he was the youngest but one of the party, and that, though very tired and stiff, "I held out quite as well as I expected, and some of the strongest fellows in the school were more knocked up than I was."

In after days he used to recall with amusement his pride in this achievement, and how he was "set up in his mind" because it put him on a level with the boys who had despised his want of strength and skill in games.

Another incident which diversified the ordinary routine of school life was a religious movement among some of the boys in the school, which he describes with youthful simplicity and sincerity, and which evidently made a deep impression upon him. At this time one of his heroes was his father's friend and fellow-minister, Stephen Grellet, of whose goodness he speaks with enthusiasm.

"19th day, 3rd mo., 1832.

"Stephen Grellet was at meeting at Frenchay yesterday morning. What a good sweet man he is. I should so like to have been at home when he came to have waited upon him. He gave us a very good sermon, indeed, chiefly upon the text of 'Halt not between two opinions,' on which he spoke of the necessity of making a good choice, and that we should not be wavering. I thought that in the latter part of his sermon, he addressed himself to us; but soon after he had sat down he rose up again, and spoke to us in particular, in a very sweet and striking manner. But he spoke as if he knew everything about us. At one time he said that our parents had no greater delight than in our being good, or words to that effect. After meeting he spoke to every one of the boys. He knew me, and said he saw both father and mother in me. The

Tucketts were so kind as to have me, and Lucas, and Fry, to dinner with him. What warm shakes of the hands he gives one."

In October, 1832, he was transferred from Mr. Lean's school to an establishment of a higher class, also associated with the Society of Friends, kept by Mr. Binns, at Grove House, Tottenham, and here the remainder of his school days were spent. At Tottenham he was close to his father's old home, and was thus constantly in communication with his uncles and other members of the Forster family. The Fowell Buxtons too had a house in London, and he had many opportunities of being with his uncle, at that time member for Weymouth, and his family. He was taken up to London by his father, when he went to school, and they spent a few days before his school duties commenced in sight-seeing. Writing to him after his own return to Bradpole, his father says :

"I so thoroughly enjoyed thee in our walks about London, and thou wast so entirely to my heart's content, so loving and tender of me, it was a true help to me at parting from thee. I had a very wakeful night, and a time of most stormy agitation it was to me. But still I felt confidence in thee. Thy good moral and religious principle, thy high sense of honour, and thy strong affection towards us, gave me real comfort."

At Grove House he made good progress in his studies. Though he neglected no part of his work, and indeed excited at times the alarm of his friends by his excessive application, which led him often to rise at four o'clock in the morning for the purpose of beginning his studies, his chief delight was in mathematics. There still exists a theme of his "On the Study of Mathematics," in which "the noblest of all human sciences, the grandest structure ever raised by mental art," was praised with so much warmth, that the fears of his master were excited on his behalf, and he was warned by that worthy man, that "all human knowledge, even that of 'the grandest and noblest structure ever raised by mental art,' was but dross in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus and Him crucified." The warning was expressed in terms so emphatic as to call forth a respectful rejoinder from Forster, then only in his fifteenth year. In the course of this reply he remarks :

"The study of mathematics is one of those pleasures without which, in our present state of imperfection, we should find existence disagreeable, if not miserable. Its abstract

tendency is not evil; in fact, to a mind convinced of the truths of revelation, it furnishes the final proofs, and the most convincing exemplifications of God's wisdom and power. Then why is it said that a pursuit after it causes us to disregard that wisdom in comparison with which, noble as it is, it must be deemed foolishness? I deny that it has that effect. It is a bad state of mind, totally independent of the study, not the study itself, which does the harm. A person to whom the truths of revelation are irksome, will gladly fly to any occupation by which his thoughts may be diverted from the irksome subject. The occupation may or may not be blamable. It equally answers his purpose, to accomplish which he makes use of means which, though not bad in themselves, yet by the use he makes of them, he forces them to serve a bad purpose. . . . I believe it is the disposition in which we are when we study, not what we study, which injures or benefits our minds, and that the study of mathematics, when rightly conducted and considered, must benefit us, because it is not only one of the most ennobling, but one of the most useful of human sciences."

There might have been some excuse for the fears excited in the heart of good Mr. Binns, by his pupil's enthusiastic devotion to the study of mathematics, if it had been accompanied by a selfish indifference to subjects of a less personal character. This, however, was far from being the case. In the year 1833, the whole country was absorbed in the great anti-slavery battle, in which Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton played so prominent a part, and William Edward Forster displayed more than a schoolboy's interest in the progress of the struggle. There is a letter from his father in April, telling him of the collection of signatures for the petitions in favour of abolition at Bridport and Bradpole. The Society of Friends was in the van of the movement; but it affected all classes of the community. "Almost everybody," says Mr. Forster, in the letter referred to, "seemed ready to give their names with their whole hearts. Many who could not write seemed as if they thought the blood of all the negroes would be upon them if they did not make their mark. I took an inkstand with me, and thou wouldst have been amused to have seen the men signing out of doors, on a horsing block, or the top of a wall. One poor fellow came up from his work; but his eyes were dim, and to leave him without excuse, I made him take my spectacles. I often think how much I should have valued thy help. Thou wouldst have managed the whole thing so capitally for me. I hope, dear, thou enjoys

this charming spring. I am sorry to say that, though I think every spring more lovely than the last, yet my heart and mind have been so engrossed by the abominations and wickedness of slavery, I have hardly been able to take any enjoyment at all. As a proof of it, I have seen but one bird's nest."

"I must tell you," writes Forster to his parents, April 5th, 1833, "of my great jaunt last third day. John Henry had seen Uncle Buxton and Edward last first day, and he came home saying that he was invited to go to Devonshire Street to the Anti-Slavery meeting. Now this put me into a great ferment; but I was determined I would get there by some means or other. So I sent a note to Chenda" (his cousin, daughter of Sir T. F. Buxton), "inviting myself, and telling her to get a note sent that evening. I was in a great fright, for I did not get the letter till just after breakfast on third day morning, when I got a very kind note from Cousin Priscilla* with a ticket. I got leave to go. The meeting began at twelve; at least, then the chair was taken. Lord Suffield occupied it. Uncle Buxton moved the first resolution, and J. J. Gurney seconded. Lord Morpeth spoke, and made a very good speech. Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, and the Reverends J. Cunningham and Barnard, Dr. Lushington, and G. Stevens all spoke. I went to dinner at Devonshire Street."

It was about this time that in a letter to him from his mother, we get a glimpse of the simple and wholly unworldly character of his father. "Did dear Uncle Buxton," writes Mrs. Forster, "seem encouraged about the slaves? Thy father begins to cast forward how the Antis are to teach the slaves when free, and to my discomfiture suggested the other day somewhat upon my going to keep a school of little blacks. Only think of the misery I should be in! I only hope I should not wish them all in slavery again, that I might be free from such bonds. Poor dear man! How he has felt about them; and it is joyous to know a day of deliverance is near."

It was only natural, of course, that the son of William Forster and the nephew of Thomas Fowell Buxton should take an interest in the question of slavery; but it may fairly be inferred, from the eagerness with which he discusses the question in his letter to his relatives, and from the anxiety he showed throughout respecting the issue of the struggle, that Forster was led quite as much by his own sympathies as by the influence of his nearest friends, to espouse the cause of the negro. In the mean time he continued his studies with marked success. The passion for mathematics was the chief

* Mrs. Andrew Johnston, died 1852.

feature of his school life; nor did it pass away when he left school. All through his life he was intensely fond of solving arithmetical and mathematical puzzles, and often found recreation in this form of mental labour, when in the midst of his political work.

The impression which he made upon those around him during this period seems to have been uniformly favourable. One of his surviving school-fellows, Mr. Henry Birkbeck, has a vivid recollection of his energy both in his games and his studies. "In the latter," Mr. Birkbeck writes, "he soon took a very leading position, and in all school matters was the advocate of every general improvement; in fact, I have often said I have had great reason all my life to be thankful for the high sense of honour he inculcated, which was previously, I fear, wanting in many of us." Another of his old school-fellows recalls the fact that he was a great favourite with the mathematical master, Mr. Richard Abbott, who pushed him forward at the expense not only of less promising pupils, but of his own health. His industry, his talents, his strong sense of honour, and his youthful enthusiasm on behalf of the great political movements which were then agitating the minds of the public, combined with his healthy love of boyish sports, and the zest with which he entered into all questions of school polity, seem to have made him a general favourite both with masters and fellow-pupils. Though devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, there was nothing about him of the prig, and though unusually sensitive and open to all gentle and kindly influences, he was never a milksop. He was, as his letters and journals abundantly prove, very impulsive. Above all, he was quick to denounce anything that he regarded as mean or unjust, his whole soul revolting against self-seeking and injustice. In his impetuosity at times, in those days, he used stronger language than the occasion seemed to demand, hitting hard at the wrong which had excited his indignation, and not sparing the wrong-doer. In the letters of his father he is warned against this failing of his, and occasionally we find his teachers also correcting it. But the whole picture of the youth during these days at school is that of an eminently healthy and noble soul—generous, sensitive, bright and sympathetic, absolutely free from the small meannesses which are at times to be found in the dispositions even of school boys.

A letter from a connection of his mother's, addressed to her in 1833, gives us a pleasing picture of Forster: "I think it will please thee to hear of thy two Williams, who left us to-day for Northrepps, after a most acceptable visit. . . . I have been

most pleasantly reminded of thee by thy sweet interesting boy, who was so like thee that I was on the point of calling him 'Anna' yesterday, and so was D——, who met them here the other day. I do not know where I have seen a boy that I liked so well as dear William, or thought near so pleasing and attractive. He strikes me as much improved since I last was with him—more subdued, less forward in his manner, indeed his manners now are just what one could wish. I have enjoyed his company, and should much like to have him more with us. He has all the effect of cultivation and refinement which one seldom meets with in an equal degree. In short, he strikes me as far superior to any boy of his age I know, except ——, who I am partial enough to think his equal, though possessing rather different qualifications. It is very interesting to me to see the two *uncommon* fathers and sons together. I could not but look on them this morning, as they all four sat together at reading with unusual pleasure and interest." Yet a little later (1834) his cousin, Priscilla Buxton, writing to his mother to report one of the school-boy's visits to his uncle's house in Devonshire Street, says: "He" (T. F. Buxton) "*forbade* his getting up at four for the present, and we can only wonder that you had ever allowed it. . . . I must say I was *charmed* with him as a companion. His intellect and powers of conversation were much beyond my expectation, and my *only* anxiety about him would be lest he should overwork himself." Still more trustworthy pictures of the boy during his days at the Tottenham school may, however, be obtained from extracts from the correspondence between himself and his father.

Letter from his Father.

"May 3rd, 1834.

"I hope thou takes enjoyment in this brilliant weather, and that now and then thou dost indulge thy young eyes with a sight of the green fields. We are looking most gay and blooming at Bradpole. The rockwork is in all its glory, and our anemones and ranunculuses are truly superb. I think we never had such fine beds of flowers before. They are quite the admiration and amazement of the village. How I wish thou could see them, and more than all that we could see thee, sweet fellow! We do so very dearly love thee and delight in thee. Uncle Fowell wrote us of his having seen thee. I fancy he gave thee a little lecture on immoderately early rising for mathematics. It is most kind of him to interest himself so

about thee. I hope thou feels it to be so. Thou really must take his advice and stay in bed till a reasonable hour, or I am afraid it will be ruinous to thy health. . . . As you are such a set of deep politicians, I should like to know what thou thinks of the ministers' new measures."

To his Father.

"Tottenham, 8th mo., 31st day, 1834.

"I am reading Jonathan Dymond's book, which I like very well. I have read the first volume of Sir James Mackintosh's 'History of England.' I like it very well. Whilst master was getting me the other two volumes, I have read Crowe's 'History of France.' It gives me a very good idea of the progress of French manners and institutions, although I think the author appears to be an expediency man. But that, perhaps, is by no means an extraordinary discovery. I have drawn up a set of regulations for the use of my play-time, by which either in my play-time, or by getting up in the morning, or by reading in bed, I obtain in every week, not including the evenings, five and a half hours mathematics, and eleven and a half hours reading; and I have set myself in my leisure time in the evening, two evenings for themes, two for mathematics, one for Latin verses, and one for Greek Testament and sundries."

To his Parents.

"Tottenham, 31st, 10th mo., 1834.

"How most truly kind it is of you to let me stop at school another half. How few parents there are who would do so. However, I think your kindness will, and indeed has had the effect of spurring me on rather than making me idle. . . . Now I have got one most particular thing to speak about. I understand from my aunts that you are going to cut down the dear old handsome, venerable wych elm. How can you think of such a piece of iniquity? Pray let it only be thoughts, and let those thoughts be washed down by the waters of oblivion; never to return. Now there are all manner of arguments to be urged against it.

"First of justice. What crime hath the poor wych committed, that it should thus unreasonably be felled? I am sure he has done all he could to ornament the premises.

"Secondly of gratitude. After he has caused the premises to be admired so many times, surely he ought not to be cut off from those premises.

“Thirdly of expediency. As he remains, he is the most beautiful tree we have; but if we cut him down there will be nothing but an old, ugly, hateful stump. Talk about shutting out the light! We don’t want to have our eyes dazzled out in the parlour. The room will be deluged by flies if we cut it down.

“Most likely, however, the crime is already perpetrated, and I shall, alas! have no more sweet climbing in its branches.”

The Christmas holiday of this year (1834) was spent, not at Bradpole with his parents, but at the Cottage at Northrepps. It was a delightful time which the boy thoroughly enjoyed. A large family party had assembled at the Hall; the Cottage too was full of guests, and the only son had an opportunity of spending Christmas surrounded by all the pleasant and exhilarating influences of youthful society. His studies were not, however, neglected during the vacation, for he read Greek with Miss Gurney regularly during his stay. It was in the spring following this visit to Northrepps that he began to be seriously exercised regarding his future occupation. The youth was eager to begin the battle of life on his own account, though he was at the same time absolutely submissive to the judgment of his father. It may be doubted, indeed, whether any son ever yielded a more unquestioning obedience to his parents than that which he displayed, not only whilst at school, but even after he had reached the years of manhood. The reader has seen how much of tenderness and gentleness there was in the elder Forster’s character. He has seen also, however, with what unflinching resolution he could nerve himself for the discharge of any task to which he felt himself called by duty. Mingled with the deep and true affection he had for his child something of this resolution is to be found. He decided his son’s movements in the light of his own ideas of what was right and seemly, and with—for a man of his gentle temperament—what seems to be a strange lack of regard for the feelings of the son himself. But the latter never rebelled against his father’s will, and never failed to submit in silence to his decisions when once they had been formed.

Thus, when the inevitable discussion began regarding the future business or profession of the son, and when, as was equally inevitable, some slight differences of opinion began to show themselves, the boy acted invariably in such a manner as to prove that the reverential regard he professed for his father was really felt, and that he was at all times ready to sacrifice his own inclinations to meet the wishes of the latter.

His own strong desire still was to go to the bar, for he saw in the profession of the law the most direct—indeed, as it then appeared to him, the only—road to political life and the House of Commons. Eager to push on, we find him at one moment chafing under what he regarded as the listlessness of Mr. Binns, his schoolmaster, and at the next pouring all manner of suggestions concerning possible ways of getting a standing at the bar into his father's ears. The latter steadily discouraged the son's aspirations; and like many another father, pointed out to the ardent youth the many difficulties which attended the path of the young barrister, the fewness of the prizes of the profession, and the long period of waiting which must be endured in almost every case, before even a modest competency can be secured. It is in reply to one of his father's letters upon this subject, demonstrating to him the slender prospect of means as a barrister, that Forster writes:—

“I have not yet had time to think sufficiently on what thou sayest with regard to my prospects; but it staggers me a good deal. If it is quite certain that I could not get a name at the bar till forty, there is most certainly an end of all thoughts about it—a most complete knock-down.”

Perhaps it was even a more complete knock-down than the father imagined. Like many men who have themselves voluntarily embraced a life of poverty and self-denial, for the benefit of others, he was anxious that his son's lot should be different from his own, and he seems to have come to the conclusion that all thoughts of a profession must be set aside, and that the boy must be devoted to a business life. For a time, indeed, the hope was entertained that a place might be found in a solicitor's office for him; then came the prospect of a clerkship in Gurney's bank, whereat the fond father was greatly delighted as offering a provision for life for his son; but gradually the field of choice seemed to narrow itself, and it became evident that it was to a commercial life that he must devote his great talents and his immense energy. At the close of 1835 he left the school at Tottenham, with his future still undecided. Many inquiries had been set on foot regarding businesses in different parts of the country; but no satisfactory opening had presented itself. He had learned all, however, that he could be taught at Tottenham, and pending a decision as to his future course, he joined his friend and school-fellow John Henry Gurney at Norwich, and with him read under a private tutor in that city, the Rev. Richard Kidd, rector of St. Swithin's. Before we leave Tottenham school altogether, however, some mention must be made of the school

themes which he wrote. Their titles are curiously suggestive of his work in after life. One is, "On the conduct of England to Uncivilized Nations;" and it sets forth in strong language our misbehaviour towards some of our dependencies. Others are on "The Advantages to Civilization from Education," "The Causes of the Misery with which Ireland has been and is now afflicted" (furnishing a vigorous indictment of English rule in Ireland), "The Lawfulness of Rebelling against an Unjust Law," and "Tithes." There is much that is vigorous and picturesque in these youthful efforts, and there are signs also of the strength of conviction and outspoken denunciation of wrong-doing which so eminently distinguished Mr. Forster in later life. Indeed, upon his essay on "Tithes" is the written caution of his master, "Beware of acrimony, William, lest whilst inveighing against an unchristian system, thou shouldst be influenced by an unchristian spirit." Writing to his father in reference to this rebuke, he says with characteristic frankness, "I had a *bene* put to my first paper on tithes; but I have got a 'preach' written at the end of the second for acrimony and unchristian spirit."

It was during his last year at school that he wrote the following letter, describing a visit to the House of Commons:—

"Tottenham, 4th mo., 3rd day, 1835.

"MY VERY, VERY DEAR PARENTS,

"I must take advantage of my frank at once, and write to you. Gibson and I went up to town yesterday to get a pair of globes. . . . I then went to Uncle Buxton's, intending to dine there, but found they had just done, and Edward was going to the House. They told me there was just no chance of my getting in. However, I thought I would try, and Uncle Buxton recommended me so to do; so I took a cab and went off with all speed. After divers adventures and being turned into the passage, Edward sent out Cousin Andrew to me, who most luckily found me, and kindly took me in and placed me by Edward in the body of the House. There was no speech of great interest till Uncle Buxton's. Goulburn was speaking before, and they got thoroughly tired of him, and were laughing and talking without any consideration; but upon my uncle's rising they became very attentive, and listened to him most gratifyingly. Of his speech the papers will inform you better than I can.

"It showed how great was his weight in the House by the eagerness of each party to claim him for their own particular views, by cheering what he had said. He was firm against

the Radicals, and for moral and religious rather than general education; said that Protestantism had suffered greatly by being the persecuting religion, and by being loaded with a wealthy and lazy clergy (vehement cheering from the Opposition), that Catholicism had had an adventitious advantage by being the persecuted party. But that now in the south of Ireland the great majority of Roman Catholics had gained power, so as to render their religion triumphant rather than persecuted, and the effects of this triumph were to produce a set of clergy as pious and devoted as ever the world beheld (loud cheering from the ministry). His amendment you will see was well received by the Opposition.

"The next members, particularly Borthwick, were not at all allowed to be heard, and I had the scene of laughing down in perfection. Dan was the next mighty man. No part of his speech, I thought, displayed more talent than the artful manner in which he took advantage of his honourable friend, the member for Weymouth's speech, to turn it to his views.

"I did not see Dan in all his glory; he was witty and clever, but afraid of being too strong for his Whig friends. Sir Robert's was indeed a noble speech; oh, so clever. I would not have missed it for anything. He seemed mortified at the part Uncle Buxton had taken; tried hard to gain him; said he was sure the honourable member for Weymouth himself would not be content if the motion succeeded. In fact he directed towards him the body of his speech. Uncle Buxton said this morning at breakfast, 'Peel looked straight at me for half an hour, trying to catch a sign of my face, till at last he turned away in despair from such a block of a face to somebody else.'

"Edward and I left when the House divided at twenty-five minutes to three. We got to bed about half-past three. Uncle Buxton did not get home till five.

"I do not think I ever enjoyed a day, or rather night, so much. I did not get to Tottenham till after dinner-time at the school. I thought I had better come to my grandmother's and dine there, and write this letter, as franks do not wait.

"Pray write to me soon.

"My grandmother says they want a letter as they have not heard for some time.

"With very dear love, I remain,

"Your most affectionate son,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"The majority was thirty-three against ministers."

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING LIFE.

FORSTER was now in his eighteenth year; his school days were finished, and pending the choice of a business, he was, as we have seen, occupying himself in studying under Mr. Kidd, at Norwich, in the company of his old friend and school-fellow, John Henry Gurney. At Norwich—or rather at Earham, where he was residing—he found himself in the midst of congenial company. Mr. Joseph John Gurney was his father's dearest friend; his son was his own school-fellow and intimate companion. Within a short distance were Northrepps Hall, the residence of his uncle, and Northrepps Cottage, the home of "the Cottage ladies." He ought to have been very happy at this time in the society of so many who were not only dear to him, but who on their side took the warmest interest in his welfare. As a matter of fact, however, this was one of the most anxious and trying seasons of his life—one upon which he ever after looked back with pain. The truth was that he was full of the unrest of youth, eager to begin his work in the world, burning with a desire to turn that remarkable energy of mind and body which distinguished him to some good account, but unable to advance because of the doubts and fears, and the leaden-weighted lethargy which oppressed his father.

Mr. Forster, senior, could not make up his mind as to his son's future. He had shown resolution enough in putting his veto upon the idea of the bar, but what was to take the place of the bar he could not determine. It was not that there were not openings of a favourable kind of which advantage might have been taken, but that the worthy man saw dangers for the son whom he cherished so tenderly attending every possible course. His great object was to shield him from all harmful influences, to keep him from worldly companions, and above all to guard him against any associations of an irreligious

kind. Forster was wonderfully patient during this period of doubt and uncertainty as to his future, though the strain upon his ardent nature was a very heavy one. Sometimes, indeed, he ventured to reason with his father on the subject of his fears; but he never betrayed any other feeling save that of the deepest respect for his judgment, and he bravely strove to curb his own impatience at the delay in his entrance upon business life. At last, through the agency of Mr. Joseph Gurney, an opening was found for him which seemed suitable to everybody. It was in the manufactory of a Mr. Robberds, at Norwich. The chief business of Mr. Robberds was the weaving of hand-loom camlets, of a kind now quite unknown, but in those days largely exported to China.

To his Mother.

"Earlham, 19th, 4th mo., 1836.

“. . . Well, now for my first day of business. Thy son is now a man of business and extremely puffed up. I went this morning at ten. Robberds soon gave me some bills of parcels to enter and examine and letters to copy. His old father was there all the morning. He is, as I suppose thou knowest, very blind. He comes in to talk, poor man, as he can do nothing else. He is a very nice old man, remarkably civil to me, and he gives me such quantities of *sirrings*—that is, he says *sir* so often—that my intense humility does not know what to do with himself. However I found his talking not at all suiting with my sums, the novelty of which required my unsophisticated attention. Robberds kindly took me to a yarn factory and showed me all about it, because thou seest, my dear mother, I am to overlook the education of the dear child Camlet from the back of a Norfolk sheep till it gets to the back of myself, barring the tailoring; for I mean to have a camlet coat with all due velocity. I am to warp some thrums myself, and intend to weave thee a parti-coloured cloak of scarlet, yellow, and blue. I came back at five most ferociously hungry, seeing that I had eaten nothing whatever. Robberds told me that he never thought of luncheon. However, I gave him to understand that I intended to think of it for half or at least a quarter of an hour every day. I do hope that I feel grateful to Joseph Gurney and my other most kind friends; and I am sure I need, for what a great comfort it is to be on the way to stand on one's own legs.”

The letter speaks for itself of the energy with which, when once he had received his parents' assent, he threw himself into

the business-life which thus opened before him. He went through all the departments of the trade he was learning. In a small upstairs room at the manufactory he had a hand-loom of his own, and there he learned the art of weaving under the tuition of one Samuel Poll, foreman to Mr. Robberds. In due time he was able to gratify the desire of his heart, by producing a piece of camlet for his own wear, and another piece which he presented to his kind friend Mr. Joseph John Gurney, by whom it was converted into a cape for out-of-door use. By-and-by, in accordance with an understanding arrived at when Forster went into Mr. Robberds's establishment, his father and mother gave up their pleasant home at Bradpole, and removed to Earham Road, Norwich, in order that their son might once more live under their roof.

Before his parents removed to Norwich, he paid frequent visits to Bradpole to see them, his warm heart always turning gladly to the place he loved so much and to those who were so dear to him. Writing to his friend Barclay Fox,* who had purposed to join him on one of these visits, he gives a characteristic account of his early home.

“Tottenham, 6th, 1st mo., 1836.

“MY DEAR BARCLAY,

“I have got a few minutes to spare before we go off to London, which we do about a quarter after seven, and I think I had better employ them in writing to thee, not for thy good, however, but for my own entirely. I do not think I gave thee, to come to the point at once, a sufficiently low view of our capabilities of entertaining thee.

“My parents are as poor as rats—which is a very great plague, but I hope to make some money before long—and consequently we live in quite a small way, for example, keeping neither carriage, nor gig, nor horses, only a small pony on

* Mr. Barclay Fox was a member of a family distinguished in the history of the Society of Friends, and known in English literature through the publication of the “*Journal of Caroline Fox*.” The home of the Foxes was at Falmouth, and there Forster in his younger days was a frequent visitor. Barclay Fox became one of his dearest and most intimate friends. He was a young man of high character and great ability. Mrs. Charles Fox was another member of the family with whom Forster was on terms of the warmest friendship. There was a distant connection between himself and the Fox family through the Birkbecks of Settle, and in acknowledgment of this relationship Forster always addressed Mrs. Charles Fox as “Aunt Charles.” She was a woman of great intellectual power, and possessed a remarkable grace and charm both of mind and manner. Through the years of his early manhood Forster was to her a much-loved younger friend. She had a very high estimate of his powers, and understood the depths both of force and tenderness in his character better than most did. His friendship both with Mrs. Charles Fox and Barclay Fox was only severed by death.

which my mother generally rides to meetings, and our house is quite a cottage. Nothing is further from my wish than in any the slightest degree to discourage thy coming. There is nothing I should enjoy so much, and both my father and mother will like it extremely, nor do I think so lowly of my friend as to suppose that he would take such things into account in his friendship; but still I thought it would be best that thou shouldst have a clear idea of things, as I should be sorry to be so selfish as to take thee away from other visits which I fear would have more in them to give thee pleasure. But still I know of nothing that would delight me so much as thy paying me a visit, and I think we might or rather will have some fun together, though I have my doubts as to the begging excursion. . . . Most fellows would think me a great fool to write such a letter, but I do not think thou wilt.

“Give my dear love and devotion to the girls, but they are great plagues, for they have unfitted me for all that is sober and good for some time to come.

“Unless thou writes by sixth days’ post from London to the contrary *we shall expect thee* to be at Bridport on seventh day night, and I shall order a bed for thee. The coach is the Herald, which goes through to Exeter, and books at the Saracen’s Head, Snow Hill, or Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane. I again repeat, *Do, do come if thou canst*; but I shall not be hurt any way, nor do I wish thee to give up anything thou wouldst enjoy more.

“Thy very affectionate friend,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

His life at Norwich was rendered both pleasant and profitable by the numerous friendships which he formed there, most of these, as was natural, being due to his connection with the Buxtons. A few extracts from his journal for 1836 will show the character of the men whom he met at the houses of his relatives, and the qualities which he admired most in those around him:—

“8th mo., 1st and 2nd day.— . . . John and Julia Venning and Dr. and Caroline Ashe came to dinner. A most interesting evening. I never met with a man of the sort whom I admired so much at first sight as John Venning. He is a right down splendid man, full of originality and warm-hearted Christian benevolence, and a noble courage in doing good—a sort of defiance, a snap-my-hands at any one who might stand in my way. . . . He told us some capital stories in a most animated and original manner. I wanted so much to see more

of him, that I asked Dr. Ashe to ask me to breakfast next morning, which he did very kindly."

"2nd day.—Breakfasted at the Ashes. John Venning was most interesting—spoke most pleasantly of Uncle Charles. He wanted to take me to Peafield, a place of villainy in Norwich, a district, and to introduce me to some one who would tell me of all the wicked people in the place, that I might visit them. I let him know that I thought I must have some little consistency myself before I could undertake such a thing. One would be glad to content one's self with moral and political philanthropy; but that does not show a right state of mind, though till one does get a right state of mind I suppose one had better leave such matters alone. Anyhow he was most kind, wished me to spend a week with him some time this month, and said he would show me his Russia journals."

Fully to understand the meaning of references like these to his own lack of "a right state of mind," we must bear in mind the exalted standard of spiritual excellence which his father constantly sought to hold before his eyes. Here, for example, are the birthday wishes which he received from William Forster in this year:—

"Bradpole, July 11th, 1836.

"MY DEAREST WILLIAM,

"... We think much of thee, and talk thee over and over again almost every time we sit down together. . . . I hope thou dost not forget thy birthday. I am sure I do not. What a crowd of thoughts rush in upon my mind when I think that thou hast nearly entered upon thy nineteenth year! There is much that gladdens and comforts my old heart; and most earnestly do I desire to give thanks for so great a blessing to Him to whom I know all thanksgiving and praise is due, that thou hast been brought thus far on thy way without more faults; that thou hast not more often stumbled, and hast been kept from falling into that which might have brought sorrow and shame upon those most near and dear to thee, and to whom thou art inexpressibly precious.

"Whilst I write, how very much do I desire that our gracious Saviour and Lord, He who delights in the peace, the purity of heart, and the upright, consistent, and circumspect walking of His believing followers, may be with thee in all the dangers and trials of the coming year (and a most important year we may expect it will be to thee in many respects), in all the joys of thy buoyant spirit, and in all thy moments of care and

anxious thought—and I know they are not few—to help thee to resist temptation, and to bless thee and give thee peace; so that if, in the good Providence of God, thou art brought to another anniversary of this day, it may be with the assurance of a good conscience—that best of all treasures.

“Make that prayer thy own (Psalm cxix. 117): ‘Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.’ It is a prayer that God will hear and answer, too. Do, my precious child, act up to the full extent of all thy resolutions. As to all matter of bad conversation at the warehouse, allow me to press it upon thee with all the warmth of affection, and the utmost earnestness of which I am capable, that thou wilt ‘have no fellowship with any of the unfruitful works of darkness,’ neither in word nor deed, but rather reprove them. I do believe that this is the time for thee to establish thyself in that which we may hope and trust will ensure thy respectability and prosperity in life, give thee true comfort, and make thee a support and blessing to us and to many others who have set their hearts upon thee.”

Such earnest invocations were by no means unfrequent on the part of the devoted preacher when he wrote to the child he loved so well. Forster himself makes frank confession of the fact that he cannot attain to those heights of spiritual fervour on which his father dwelt; but even in this time of his budding manhood, and when distance makes anything in the nature of parental control impossible, we find him constantly striving to act in conformity with his father’s wishes, so far as he is able to do so without falling into the error of professing to be something more than he actually was. Writing to Barclay Fox in September of this year, laying plans for a tour which they were to take jointly through Devonshire, he says, “There is nothing like a good, clear understanding of things beforehand; so I’ll just mention one thing more. I find it will grieve my father so much if I do not use the plain language to people I may meet on our tour, that I must set out with the intention of so doing. I thought it best to tell thee of it, because, though of course such intention need not affect thy conduct at all, yet, as judging of thee by myself, it might surprise, perhaps bother thee rather. It is better thou shouldst know it before the place is fixed, though I do not suppose thou wouldst allow such a thing to derange the plan. . . . I find my mother, supposing thee to have influence with scientific men, has been writing thee an epistle on cruelty. Don’t let it bother thee; but if thou shouldst have a good and

easy opportunity to preach to anybody upon those abominable living experiments, and let her know thereof, she will never be tired of holding thee up to the admiration of all the lads and lasses within hearing, and it will be a great kindness to her, at any rate, for she has been reading those dreadful things about galvanized frogs and impaled dogs, etc., till she is the same herself as if she had a continual shock of galvanism about her."

The "plain language," it is perhaps superfluous to explain, is that style of speech peculiar to the Friends, which has now, like their peculiar dress, become practically obsolete amongst them in their intercourse with strangers. It cannot have been an easy matter for a high-spirited lad of eighteen, who was about to start with a companion on a holiday tour, to undertake throughout his journey to make use of phraseology which, as he himself knew full well, would certainly expose him to the ridicule of the vulgar and the intolerant. This, however, was by no means the hardest trial to which he had to submit for the purpose of showing that implicit obedience to his father which throughout his life he regarded in the light of a sacred duty. The "Cottage ladies" were among the dearest and best of his circle of friends at Norwich. He visited them regularly; he read with them, he corresponded with them, he was inspired by them to undertake work which was calculated to employ all his energies of mind and body in noble fields of public usefulness. On their part they entertained for him feelings of almost motherly affection. Their letters, and especially those of Miss Anna Gurney, show that they regarded him not only with esteem, but with confidence and pride. They perceived thus early his uncommon powers, and believed him to be destined for a life of no ordinary distinction. They proposed, on one occasion during his stay in Norwich, to take him with them as their companion on one of those extended continental journeys in which they, from time to time, indulged. It would be difficult to imagine a proposal more delightful to an ardent and ambitious youth than this. Forster, at all events, hailed it with something like rapture. But the consent of his father had to be obtained. This consent was refused upon grounds which to an outsider certainly seem wholly inadequate. The disappointment must have been a keen one to Forster; but he submitted to it not only without a murmur or remonstrance, but with a manifest desire that his father should have no idea of the magnitude of the sacrifice which he had imposed upon his son. This little incident is but one of many which might be related in connection with

this period in Forster's life. The good man whom he was proud to claim as his father, and to whom he was tenderly attached, was at times very trying to the youth by reason of his almost morbid timidity, his want of decision, and his devotion to ideas with which his son could not have much sympathy.

It was during this period, however, when he was still learning his "business" as a maker of camlet in the warehouse of Mr. Robberds, that Forster first began to take his own part in public affairs. A nephew of Thomas Fowell Buxton, and constantly under the inspiring influence of the Cottage ladies, it would have been strange, indeed, if he had not been interested in those great questions of public morality with which the name of Buxton may be said to be historically associated. We find him discussing with Miss Gurney a paper written by her on the relations of England with uncivilized nations, and asking the advice of his uncle as to whether it would be wise for him to raise an agitation on the apprenticeship question. There were other directions, as the following letter indicates, in which he was seeking to find an opening for public work.

To ROBERT BARCLAY FOX.

"Norwich, 10th, 7th mo., 1837.

"... 11th.—This is my birthday; nineteen years of wisdom have passed over my head now, my boy. Well, if the next three years have not more stir in them than all the other nineteen it shan't be my fault. By-the-bye, I become a salaried clerk to-day, with £60 salary the first year, and £100 the next. One thing is plain to me, that we are all of us too much bound down by custom and by an enslavement to the common jog-jog way of doing things, for I am sure that many an outlandish project which bears the appearance of absurdity, only appears so because people suppose that it is to be effected by the usual means; such projects must in reality be executed by out-of-the-way—extraordinary means, which after all are often very nearly as easy, sometimes easier, than the common humdrum way of doing things. Thou asked me about my essay on 'Capital Punishment.' I did write one, and did take it to a bookseller, but he was no ways inclined to take it at his risk, and I was no ways inclined to take it at my own, so there the affair stuck; but he was very civil, and it answered one good thing, of my getting an introduction to one of those disagreeable, powerful beings—booksellers. At present I am writing for a prize of £50 offered by the Aborigines Society. My great literary ambition is a liberal, literary, entertaining,

philanthropic magazine; one which should be cheap enough to get a large circulation, if it deserved it; one which should have a decided religious tendency, without being so regularly religious as to drive people away from it; which would show that there can be innocent amusement, and which should not attempt to check, but rather to turn to good purposes the radical renovating spirit of the age. What piece of foolery is the fellow up to now? thou wilt say. Stop a bit, Barclay. When Hassan ben Something, the founder of the sect of the Assassins, was a friendless, powerless fugitive, he said, 'Give me two friends, and I will crush the power of the Khalif.' He did crush the power of the Khalif. I say, 'Give me but one friend, and that friend thyself, and we will establish a magazine, and will get money and power and do good.' Allow me to say, Barclay, my dear friend, thou hast not ambition enough. I am sure I do not wish to flatter thee, for I hate flattering anybody but myself; but thou hast undoubtedly *very* considerable power, strength of genius, and, what's more, control over this strength; and, besides, thou art not obliged to be such a slave to the search after filthy lucre as poor me. Such powers as these were not given thee, excuse me, merely to make thee popular, but to make thee useful, and also, though much the lower motive, to give thee a name and power amongst thy fellows. I have very low motives mixed up with my ambition, I know, self-interest, etc., driving me on, but still I flatter myself that I have sometimes a violent desire to do good in my generation. Now thee see this magazine would unite both motives. Our youth is not against us. A new magazine ought to be young and ardent. Anyhow, we two young fellows, one soul, as it were, if we can't (get) up something between us more shame to us: for I take it that when two fellows are united in friendship, as we are, their united mental powers are not double, but rather the square of the power of each, they help one another so much. However, pray write very soon, and let thy letter name a *very* early time of coming to see me, and we will look at one another's airy castles. Thou **MUST** come **SOON**. Thou wilt be most thoroughly welcome to everything we have; thou know'st what a poor humble way we live in, but I know thee too well to fear thy minding that. . . . My very respectful love to thy parents, and most humble desire that they let thee come at once. Oh, dear, how I should like some fun.

"Thy very affectionate friend,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"Pickwick is my great comfort."

The year 1837 passed somewhat uneventfully over his head. One event of importance in the family circle it did indeed witness, the removal of which mention has already been made of his father and mother from their home at Bradpole to Norwich. In March they took a house in the Earlham Road, and their son went to reside with them. At this time, as he records in his diary, they were all three "very low," Forster himself being much depressed regarding his prospects in life. Robberds was not prospering, and it seemed to the ardent and ambitious youth, that he himself was never likely to make his way in the world if he continued at Norwich. Still there were diversions in his life of which he made the most. His visits to the Cottage ladies were regular, and he never failed to meet with the kindest and most sympathetic welcome. He became a teacher in the spring of the year, in a Sunday school established by the Norwich meeting of the Society of Friends, and about the same time he took an active part in connection with a preaching mission conducted by leading Friends in the country around Norwich. It should be explained that it was customary, when recognized preachers of the society engaged in these missions, for young Friends to accompany them for the purpose of summoning the meetings. His diary for 1837 affords glimpses of this and other incidents in his life at this period, as the following extracts will show:—

"21st, 4th mo.—After some changes it was settled that I should go on the box with J. and H. Backhouse and E. Kirkbride round the country, where they are going to hold public meetings. This was very pleasant for me, particularly as there was hardly any business at the warehouse. Off we went about two, and went through Loddon and Beccles to Lowestoft, from which place, after many changes and a tea, I sallied forth to Friends at Pakefield on a sky-raking post-horse. I did as I was bid to the best of my ability.

"1st, 5th mo.—Got up early to give my first notices for a public meeting, which with a young Friend, Wright, we did pretty fully through the town. There was a meeting with Friends at Pakefield in the morning. We breakfasted at S. Blakeley's, I firing off notices from the box as we went, to the great delight of J. Backhouse and disgust of E. Kirkbride. Fine and interesting meeting. Methodist meeting-house full.

"3rd, 5th mo.—Rode twelve miles before breakfast to get some fossils for Anna of a little old farmer who lives by himself beyond Pakefield, and has a most capital collection.

"4th.—We stopped at Yarmouth all day. Very poor public meeting there.

"5th.—We left Yarmouth about nine. Long stage to North Walsham—four hours. Lunched there. Went on to North-repps Hall. Pleasant visit there and at the Cottage. Uncle B. most kind; gave me the most generous present of £20, and was very sociable about capital punishment. We went on to Holt that night, stopping some time at Cromer, where we met my dear father.

"6th.—Stopped at Holt all day; very pleasant people. Cram full, and very interesting meeting; my father and Hannah Backhouse preaching in Methodist meeting-house at Holt. I have very much enjoyed being this way with H. Backhouse."

A little later in the year came the dissolution of Parliament, consequent upon the Queen's accession.

From his diary.

"18th, 7th mo.—The Queen dissolved Parliament in person yesterday. Two candidates on the Whig side came down last evening, Ben Smith and Mountford Nurse. Both parties cooping with all their might. Blue and white beginning.

"24th.—. . . Went to the nomination of the city candidates this morning. The nomination was at eight. Went in with the mob into the lower court. Great rush when the door was opened. Lost John and my walking-stick; got my arm caught for some time, and broke my watch-glass in my watch-pocket. When the crier demanded attention for the reading of the Act against bribery and corruption, he burst out a-laughing at the end, in which he was followed by the sheriff, candidates, and almost everybody else. Sir Robert Harvey proposed the Marquis of Douro; his father, Scarlett; Mrs. Southwell's son, Smith; John Robberds, Nurse; with Dr. Evans's most violent secondment. The show of hands much in favour of the Blues. The Tories demanded a poll, and then everybody marched off, after three cheers for Smith and Nurse. All done in forty minutes.

"25th.—. . . About a quarter-past six, three stage coaches went past. About half-past seven, two came back with about forty purples—cooped voters—and their guard. About nine I sallied off to take observations. At the Magdalen Ward booth, I saw some dreadful cases of voting drunken people, both Whig and Tory: one in which the man could hardly speak, and there were two men roaring 'Smith' and 'Nurse' in his ears. I went to all the polling-places in the course of the time. About three I saw some furious bludgeon-fighting in

Palace Plain—the police taking bludgeons from some Tory hired countrymen. The mayor and sheriff were there. One of the police was badly wounded by a bludgeon. The soldiers were sent for, and then, the mayor thinking he could do without them, George Everett, the sheriff's son, a boy, and myself were sent to stop them. We very soon met them in the road leading from the Plain to the barracks, trotting forward with their swords drawn. We held up our hands and partially stopped them, but the mayor altered his mind and they came on. The policemen had got the better; but the soldiers soon cleared the place. The hiring was traced home to D——, a Tory tradesman, who was taken and clapped into the sheriff's carriage. The poll was not officially declared to-day; but it was believed that one Tory at least was in. Dined and drank tea at Earlham. Slept there also.

“26th.—Both the Tories in: the lowest majority twenty.”

In December of this year both Mr. and Mrs. Forster were absent from their home upon preaching expeditions, their son remaining at Norwich engaged in his work at Mr. Robberds's. They returned before Christmas, and again there was serious debate, and much anxiety with regard to William's future. Finally (January 8th, 1838), it was settled, with the consent of Robberds, that Forster should temporarily give up his place in the warehouse, his father resolving that until some more suitable employment could be found for him, he should spend his time in studying classics, modern languages, and essay-writing. “A very disagreeable necessity,” is the comment of the diary, “but the best that can be done.” Fortunately, however, his way was to be made smooth in a somewhat unexpected fashion. His health not being very good at this time, his father proposed that he should make a journey to the North of England, where there were many old friends. He left Norwich for Darlington, where he stayed with Jonathan and Hannah Backhouse and their family, with whom he afterwards became very intimate.

Early in this year he had been engaged in assisting his uncle in preparing material for speeches and articles upon the slavery question, and had even won commendation from Mr. Buxton for the intelligence and the steadfast perseverance which he displayed in his task. Indeed, from this time forward uncle and nephew began to correspond regularly on public questions. At Darlington it would appear that Mr. Buxton's views upon some points in connection with the question of apprenticeship, were not altogether in favour, and Forster mentions in his diary that he had to defend them

against the opinions of others. It is clear that he delighted in argument, and that he had already learned how valuable intelligent controversy may become as a method of education. The uncompromising spirit which distinguished the man was indeed already evident in the youth, and there was no holding back of an honest opinion merely because it did not happen to be popular with the company in which he found himself. "I was teetotalish for my stomach's sake, before I left Norwich," he remarks in his diary at Darlington; "but they are so violent here that I take a little wine for spite's sake." He greatly enjoyed his stay with his good friends at Darlington, whatever might be his differences of opinion with them. He accompanied Hannah Backhouse—who was famous among the Friends of the North as a preacher—upon several of her religious journeys, and records his deep admiration for her character. He visited Durham, and being anxious to see Ushaw College, called upon the local Catholic priest, and introduced himself as being, "as thou seest, a member of the Society of Friends, a connection of the Backhouses, and a nephew of Fowell Buxton, who is travelling over the country seeing all he can, and who wishes very much to be allowed to look over the Catholic College of Ushaw." The gentleman whom he thus addressed showed every disposition to oblige him, and having given him a letter of introduction to the President of Ushaw, received in return from Forster a bundle of slave trade papers. After getting a peep at Newcastle and South Shields, in both of which places Mrs. Backhouse preached, he went back to Norwich, where, however, his days of sojourning were already numbered.

This journey to the North of England formed a turning-point in Mr. Forster's life. Then it was that he first formed that attachment to the people of the North and to their modes of speech and action which remained with him to his latest days an enduring and a growing passion. Reviewing the results of his visit, he remarks that he has "thoroughly seen the activity of Durham, which makes me sigh over the inactivity of Norwich, and has got an intimate love and acquaintance of the Backhouses." It is not surprising that, having given up his work in Norwich, his thoughts should naturally have turned in the direction of the place where he had not only spent many happy days in the company of thoroughly congenial friends, but where he had found himself in the midst of scenes of public and commercial activity of which he had certainly never seen the like in Norfolk. An opening was found for him in the woollen mill of the Peases,

at Darlington. An extract from his diary for July 24th, 1839, tells the tale of his removal from Norwich.

"I have been a wicked long time without writing up my journal. This blank interval has been the most full of events of any period of my life. I must just run over them. I attended the last week of the yearly meeting, and had a very pleasant time before it and after it. Uncle Buxton employed me in getting up facts for him upon Mahomedan, Northern and East Coast slave trade. About a week after yearly meeting, Barclay came down and gave me a most pleasant and delightful visit for rather more than a week. We went over to Northrepps for two nights. About a fortnight after this, on the seventh day of the week, and fourth of this month, I left Norwich for Darlington, Joseph and Henry Pease having most kindly agreed to allow me the run of their mill to gain a knowledge of wool and wool-spinning. . . . My father left me to-day, having spent a few days here on his return from Westmoreland. Our time together has been most pleasant, and I think he has gone off with his spirits re-fitted. What a comfort. My mother seems also to be in better spirits. My occupation is wool-sorting, under teaching of experienced North countrymen, gruffish, intelligent, in the main civil. Go to work at six; breakfast, eight; dine, half-past one; leave off, six. An hour for breakfast, an hour and a half for dinner. Employment dirty drudgery; standing tiring; bear it heroically, because I hope it will do me good. Peases most kind in opening things to me. Friends generally most kind, opening their houses in a most hearty way for me to pop in when I like. . . ."

A few days before making this entry in his journal he had written to his father.

" July 18th, 1838.

"I am thoroughly settled into wool-sorting, with my slip paper cap and shears. My hours as yet at the mill have been from six to six, with an hour for breakfast, and an hour and a half for dinner, the same as the men, with the exception of an hour more for meals, which the length of my walk (ten minutes) renders necessary. I think my friends are satisfied with my hours. They are my own choosing, and longer than what Edward Pease proposed. I have been punctual with exception of this morning, when, owing to rather a bad headache—better now—I did not go out before breakfast. I breakfast at eight, dine at half-past twelve. I stand the whole time, which is tiring as yet, but I hope soon to get

used to it. The employment is very dirty; but of course I do not mind that nor the length of the hours. The only thing I do mind, and that I cannot conceal from thee, though of course I should not tell my friends here, is its tedious drudgery, the little employment for one's thoughts, which makes me very glad to get over each hour of work. However, if it be drudgery that will tell, I hope I am man enough to bear it, and in time not to mind it; but I do think that my stay here ought not to be employed entirely in this part of practical work, but that if I could for part of the time have some part in the counting-house, the practical knowledge of the clerking in a great concern would, considering my little experience in it, be of as much use to me as anything else. I think, from what Edward Oxley says, this would not be difficult. However, all this can be talked over when thou comes. Only I wish thee to understand that it is my full wish not to regard present comfort or ease to the prejudice of the excellent opportunity afforded me by the great kindness of the Peases, of which I am determined to make the most at all costs. I see more than ever the necessity of writing a decent hand, and shall attend systematically to it in the evenings as soon as I get sufficiently little tired. I do hope, my dear father, thou art getting on pretty comfortably: Friends are very frequent in their kind inquiries about thee."

It was not merely his handwriting which he was anxious to improve during these evening hours which now furnished his sole opportunity for relaxation after his long day of tedious labour in the mill. "I do not know whether you are going to send a parcel," he writes to his parents (September 22nd, 1838), "but if you are, please send Abbot's 'Trigonometry,' Hamilton's 'Conic Sections,' Lacroix's 'Differential Calculus,' and especially Taylor's 'Elements of Algebra.'" Somewhere about the same period he met with Hartley Coleridge, and his reminiscences of that interesting and unfortunate man of letters are worth preserving:

[Undated] 1838.

"I got back to Sedbergh about five on third day. Hearing from Kendal that Hartley Coleridge was staying at Sedbergh, I wrote a note to him asking him to take tea with me as Sarah Fox's relation. . . . The next day was rainy, and most dull was the prospect, but happily I met H. C. in the street, and he spent the day with me and read me several of his unpublished sonnets. It was such an intellectual treat as I

never had before. He is a strange compound of eccentricity, immense power of reasoning and imagination, amiability, simplicity, and utter want of self-command. I should think his conversation was equal to his father's. In fact, those who know him think it to be so. I never heard anything like it. But—poor fellow—I had the greatest difficulty to keep him sober. But I did so. Coleridge is fat, one-sided, about five feet high, eyes dark, hair gray or black. He is a most strange-looking mortal, and worth observing if thou meets him in the street."

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PUBLIC WORK.

It might well have seemed to Forster that twelve hours a day of arduous drudgery in the woollen mill, followed by a certain number of hours in the evening devoted to mental improvement, were work enough. But the young man's ambition was not to be denied. He had already marked out for himself his own path in life. To the end of his days he might be compelled to earn his living as a manufacturer; but at least he would devote all his surplus time and spare energy to public work. There are not many youths of twenty, however, who, situated as Forster was at this time, and indeed throughout his stay in Darlington, would have been either willing or able both to undertake and to perform so much in the shape of public duty. At this period his uncle, Mr. Fowell Buxton, had retired from Parliament; but instead of indulging in the repose to which his years and his labours entitled him, he was bent upon completing the labours of his public career by striking a final blow at the slave trade, and by doing something to open up the dark continent to the humanizing and civilizing influences of legitimate commerce. The pioneer of not a few great reforms of world-wide bearing, he was now foremost in endeavouring to draw the attention of the people of England to the possibility of saving Africa from the horrors of the slave trade by developing its industries and its commerce. He spent the spring of 1838 in London, preparing, with the assistance of his son-in-law, Mr. Andrew Johnston, a statement on the subject of the commercial development of Africa, which he was anxious to submit to the then Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, and to his colleagues in the Cabinet. All through the summer and the autumn of the year he worked hard at his task, verifying his statements, we are told, "by evidence of first-rate authority, both naval and military." Among those who assisted him in the work, no one was more

energetic or more zealous than his nephew, the young wool-sorter at Darlington. Mr. Fowell Buxton, as has already been stated, had great confidence in Forster's judgment, and young as the latter was, he entrusted him with the task of getting up not a little of the evidence upon which the appeal to the Government was to be founded.

The story of Mr. Forster's life cannot be made to include the story of the agitation against the iniquitous slave trade carried on by the Spanish, Portuguese, and Brazilians, after Wilberforce had put an end to the same iniquity under the British flag. It is necessary, however, to a full understanding of Mr. Forster's public work, that his relations with his uncle, and his share in the movement for carrying aid to the Africans, should be made clear.

How he stood with Mr. Fowell Buxton at this time may be gathered from the following letter addressed by the uncle to his nephew :—

“Northrepps Hall, August 28th, 1838.

“DEAR WILLIAM,

“Thanks for your letter, which I did not receive till after the day you were to see Montgomery Martin. I am very happy to find that you have a few spare hours per day, which you can devote to the slave trade. Depend upon it, you shall have something to do. I will send you a copy of my book, and you will see what I am aiming at. Don't show it about, as it would ruin all, if it got out. Between ourselves, Pease is trying to get it for Brougham; but his lordship shall not have it. This edition was for the Government. I have seen most of them, and was particularly pleased with what Melbourne said. The part I design for you is an account of the Northern Slave Trade, and a brief, but powerful illustration of the commercial advantages to be derived from that part of the world. Now, will you undertake the northern part, and have it ready for me in grand style by November 1st? My work for the public is intended to come out in December. . . .

“Your affectionate uncle,
“T. F. BUXTON.”

It is hardly necessary to say that Forster undertook the task which was thus proposed to him, and for the remainder of that year all his leisure was devoted to the work of compiling statistics and drawing from them arguments on the sub-

ject of the Northern Slave Trade, and the good results which might be expected to flow from the commercial development of Africa. The enthusiasm which long years afterwards was evoked on behalf of General Gordon and his mission to the Soudan, was shown now in the cause of which Mr. Fowell Buxton was the leading representative and champion. Many letters written by Forster at this time still exist, and they all give proof of the thoroughness with which he went about the work he had undertaken. He never, to the end of his days, was satisfied with a half-knowledge of any subject upon which he had to give an opinion. His first demand in answer to his uncle's letter was for books, maps, and parliamentary papers, and his next for a clear indication of the manner in which he was to treat the difficult theme. Then, when he had been armed with these necessary materials, he threw himself into his work with almost passionate eagerness. Soon after writing to him as above, Mr. Fowell Buxton sent him the private copy of his letter to Lord Melbourne, which, with the aid of Forster and others, he was now expanding into a volume. Its receipt was acknowledged in the following letter:—

“Darlington, 15th, 9th mo., 1838.

“MY DEAR UNCLE,

“I am much obliged to thee for thy book, which I have read with great interest, and which I will take care to keep to myself. The facts are so clear and telling that they make my blood boil, as if the slave trade and its horrors was a new idea; and as to the suggestions, they appear to me so convincing, not only as to the probable, but as to the speedy effect of legitimate commerce, that any of the ministers, who may chance to be blessed with consciences, must, one cannot but think, see the awful responsibility they incur by any unnecessary delay. *Most* glad should I be, if by doing anything, or going anywhere, I could be of the slightest use in the mighty cause.

“I should be very much obliged for my papers on the Northern Slave Trade. I really can do nothing without them, they have nearly all my authorities quoted at full length. I have no books here, nor can I get many of them, as they are out of print; and my memory I can by no means trust to. . . . Dost thou mean to say more about the East Coast in the next edition? If I can be of any use on that point, please let me have my papers on Mombas. May I also ask whether the next edition is to be much larger than this?

because I can then have some notion how long I should make my paper.

“I remain, thy affectionate nephew,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

How anxious he was to complete his task by the time appointed by his uncle, is shown in a letter to Miss Anna Gurney, in the course of which he says:

“Owing to a convenient headache and sore throat, now gone, last Saturday I stayed from business, and cleared twelve hours odd work, and thereby got East Coast, Imâm, and Christian ready for copying by afternoon meeting yesterday.

“I shall get on merrily this week, for I had been obliged to give up sitting up late, owing to one of my hostesses, a desperately nervous body, being given to palpitating if any one sits up in the house, so that when she found out I should not finish till the end of this week, she declared she should die first. But she is gone, I am happy to say, into the country to-day, and I may ‘gang my own gate,’—but you need not fear my doing myself any harm. I must tug at it till I get done, for this sort of work on one’s shoulders pushes and pokes one on.”

His task was duly executed, and on November 27th, he received from Mr. Andrew Johnston a letter which must have been very sweet to him.

“Colonial Office, November 27th, 1838.

“MY DEAR WILLIAM,

“Your paper on Eastern Slave Trade is *now* being shown to Lord Glenelg. I read it to your uncle on our way up yesterday. He is delighted with it, and kept saying as I proceeded, ‘Capital!’ ‘Well done, Willy!’ ‘There he has it!’ ‘Still on the right scent!’ ‘He has entirely beat my book!’ This must be most gratifying to you. I had, indeed, great pleasure in reading your performance. What a deal of labour it must have cost you!

“McQueen has given us some more materials for you which will accompany this. And Dr. Bowring is making up a large parcel of information as to Egypt and Abyssinia, which he promises to let us have next week. It will, of course, be forwarded to you. . . . Your uncle has seen Lord Glenelg and learns that the Government adopts his plan! See fourth of Zechariah, ‘What art thou, O mountain? A plain.’

“Ever affectionately,

“ANDREW JOHNSTON.”

In a letter from Mr. Nixon (Sir T. Fowell Buxton's private secretary) to Mr. Fowell Buxton,* written in April, 1886, after Mr. Forster's death, we get a glimpse of him and his uncle:—

“In the account of the funeral service in the Abbey yesterday, it is stated that the coffin passed close to the statue of Mr. Forster's uncle, the first Sir Fowell Buxton. This remark took me back at once to a scene in the study at Northrepps. . . . It was, I think, in the thick of the preparation for the Niger expedition that William Edward Forster was staying at Northrepps. Your father was excessively busy, and suffering from overwork. A paper required to be written, at once short, strong, and telling. Your father was too ill to undertake it, and I was too much occupied to admit of the attempt that day. It occurred to Sir Fowell that his nephew was at hand, so he was summoned, and at once undertook the task. Next morning, after breakfast, the paper was produced and carefully read over in the study. The subject had been grasped and treated in the most masterly style; there was not a word too much or too little. Your father, who was much pleased and gratified, scarcely allowed his nephew time to leave the room before, looking at me over his spectacles—as you will well remember was his custom—he made this short remark, which we may well call a prophecy, “I tell you what it is, Nixon—I shall not live to see it, but you may—that young man will make his mark.”

Mr. Fowell Buxton's plan for the removal of the evils of the African slave trade, it should be explained, comprised the following points: (1) to impede the traffic; (2) to establish legitimate commerce in Africa; (3) to teach agriculture; (4) to impart education. This involved, among other things, the formation of a trading company with power to acquire lands in Africa, and it was for the purpose of effecting this that the ill-fated Niger expedition was undertaken. It was at first hoped that this expedition, which was undertaken under the sanction and with the assistance of the Government, would have a speedy and brilliant success, and those who had been most active in influencing public opinion in favour of the movement for putting an end to the chronic miseries of Africa, were not less prominent in advocating the interests of the company formed for the settlement of the country bordering on the Niger. The scheme, however, was not without its strenuous opponents; and, strange to say, some of the most implacable of those opponents were men who were

* Mr. Fowell Buxton, now of Easneye, Herts, is the only survivor (1888) of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's eleven children.

themselves devoted to the great cause of abolition. Of these by far the most prominent and powerful was Mr. Sturge. Sturge opposed Mr. Buxton's plan, partly because it introduced the trading element into a philanthropic enterprise, and still more strongly because it relied or appeared to rely upon force; for one of the proposals made by its author was that the British squadron in African waters should be strengthened in order that it might more effectually put down the infamous traffic in human flesh. It is needless now to revive the old controversy. Sturge was true to the principles of his sect; whilst Fowell Buxton, who, as has already been said, was not a Friend, showed the more vigorous and the more practical spirit in the proposals he made for dealing with an evil which was equally abhorred by both.

That which is of interest as denoting the bent of the young man's character, was the line which William Edward Forster took in this controversy. Quaker though he was, he clung stoutly to the views of his uncle. His father, on the other hand, was somewhat inclined to the more pacific and negative policy of Sturge, who believed that the only way in which the slave trade could be put down was by putting an end to slavery itself, this end of course being achieved by moral suasion alone. Forster was then in his twenty-first year. Already, as has been seen, he had lent valuable aid to Mr. Fowell Buxton in the preparation of his plans and arguments. He now took up the defence of the scheme with a vigour and a maturity of thought and expression which the most impartial of observers will admit to have been remarkable in so young a man. It is interesting to see how in this, almost his first appearance in the field of public controversy, the essentially practical character of his mind displayed itself.

"How I wish," he writes to his aunt, April 5th, 1839, "I could give myself up to the cause entirely! I have disposed of all my copies" (of the book) "but one; I hope to good. I talk legitimate commerce everywhere, and I always find persons to acknowledge its reasonableness. . . . Sturge has, I see, invited all delegates for the day after to-morrow. I do not fear him, provided there be fair-play; but we must remember that he has twenty tongues and pens at work where we have one, and my great fear is that he will succeed, not in pushing forward his own plans, but in prejudicing the country philanthropists against Uncle B.'s, by the constant reiteration of 'no indirect sanction to any armed force,' 'abolition of slavery the only means of abolishing the slave trade,' so that if Uncle B. finds that the voice of the country

is wanting to push ministers on, or even if they call for it to warrant them in any expense, he may not be able to raise that voice just at the needful time. Have you any choice morsels for country newspapers? I could get them in at Newcastle, Sheffield, and Durham; by means of William Leatham, in Yorkshire; Barclay Fox, in Falmouth; and I think I could manage them for Glasgow and Edinburgh."

Part of his work at this time was that which is mentioned in the last passage of the foregoing extract. No man believed more fully than he in the power of the press, and he was most active in securing through the leading papers in the north of England the means of influencing public opinion in favour of his uncle's plan. He used his own pen with success in some of these papers; but he did still more in the way of inspiring others. Nor was this all. He saw clearly that the anti-slave trade cause was in danger of being ruined by the growing antagonism between his uncle's party and the Sturgeites, and with a courage and a force which were indeed beyond his years, he ventured to counsel even his uncle, the veteran philanthropist, as to the dangers which he might incur if he set himself in open opposition to Sturge's movement.

"Will you bear with me," he writes, April 12th, 1839, "if I send you two or three ideas, crude as they may very likely be, which have occurred to me, as to the prevention as much as possible of his (Sturge) doing us any harm? First, as to making use of it. So long as they keep to exciting the country upon the facts of the slave trade, they do unmixed good, because they raise a feeling which will make ministers feel they must do something. Could not Uncle Buxton then, on the one hand, by means of his friends in their camp, so control their movements, as to get a resolution passed at their public meeting in Exeter Hall, calling upon ministers in strong terms to make some new efforts; and on the other hand, by means of Dr. Lushington or some one of his friends in the House of Commons, and in his private interviews with the ministers, *show them that their credit as a ministry* as well as humanity, *demand that they should make* such efforts; in short, that they should get Fernando Po? Does Uncle B. think that Lord Palmerston is so earnest after this object, that no motive of policy would make him more so? Even if the Sturgeites pressed upon ministers a plan of their own, still the country generally, and Parliament, would for a time at least, be satisfied if they brought forward any reasonable scheme; and their scheme, we know, would be ours, partly because it is the only one they are convinced of, and partly because the

other would be mighty inconvenient, one of its main points being a treaty with Spain and Brazil, by which they are to agree to abolish slavery, on condition that we give them a British market for their sugar and coffee, by lowering the bonus on West India produce, which would of course put the West India interest into a fury at once. Next, as to preventing harm or prejudice from Sturge's movements. I must repeat my belief, that if by a letter from Uncle Buxton or otherwise, as you may think best, it was clearly placed before that party; that the one scheme is directed against the supply, the other against the demand; that if either the supply or demand be stopped the slave trade must cease; that so vast an evil ought to be attacked, if possible, both ends at once; that such attacks cannot hurt, are utterly independent of and must assist one another; that Sturge is probably confounding the attempt to stop the supply with the attempt to stop the conveyance of the supply to the demand, which both parties equally acknowledge to be fruitless; and that, in short, allowing all manner of honour and glory to Sturge's scheme, the abolition of slavery is *not the only way* to abolish the slave trade, and no true friend to the negro would say it was;—I think, I say, that if such sentiments were laid before the Sturge party, they would, at least a great portion of them, listen to them, and thus people would be kept unprejudiced, until we were able to come out fairly, show ourselves, and challenge all prejudice or opposition."

This is but a portion of a long letter in which the practical question of how best to turn an agitation which threatened to be dangerous to his uncle's movement into a source of strength was discussed with masterly fulness and freedom. Still carrying on the campaign, Forster went to Manchester to try and move the Chamber of Commerce to support the Buxton plan. Before going he remarked in a letter to Miss Gurney: "It is from Cobden that opposition will come, if it comes at all; but I trust that the book will make him hold his tongue. He is evidently a clever and very fluent man, but likely to mistake a crotchet for a principle and stick to it like a leech." In his future life Forster himself showed that there was no man of his time who was less likely to "mistake a crotchet for a principle" than himself; and it was this very readiness to sacrifice his mere crotchets in order to secure the triumph of his principles—in other words, to sacrifice the non-essentials to the essentials—that led his political opponents to write of him as "a trimmer."

His father, who was evidently more anxious that he should

stick to business than that he should take thus early an active part in public affairs, was not altogether pleased with him for having gone to Manchester on such a mission; and on May 30th, Forster had to write explaining why he went. He went on in the same letter to speak of his position at Darlington and his business prospects, regarding which both he and his father were naturally very anxious:—

“With regard to business, I do most fully agree with thee that I ought to make use of every advantage I can, and especially to endeavour to gain a character for business habits; and I trust that I do contend against the irksomenesses of my situation. I am reading works on machinery and am striving after knowledge on that point. The great irksomeness is that the hours of business are long, and of course I feel it right to be there; but time hangs very heavy, because I have nothing actually to do now that I have acquired the positive art of sorting; only things to look at, and it is very difficult as well as disagreeable to look on for hours at such things. It was very different with Joseph Pease when he learnt the business, or with any young person who learns a business with a view to taking a part in that business, because he always has some post or office which exercises his mind, and occupies at least a great part of his time. I have nothing of this sort. I make these remarks, however, merely that thou mayst fully understand my position, not by way of complaining, for that would be both wrong and foolish; and in fact this is a trial which is not up to the standard, I am sorry to say, of thy trials, my dearest father, and indeed of those few I have had myself. . . .”

It was in the midst of these perplexities that a new prospect appeared to be opened before him. “Do you know,” wrote his uncle on July 2nd, 1839, “a capital person to head the commission to go and make treaties on the Niger this autumn? He must be a first-rater?” On July 3rd, however, before receiving the inquiry which showed the confidence his uncle reposed in his judgment, he addressed the following letter to his father:—

“Darlington, July 3rd, 1839.

“MY DEAREST FATHER,

“I send thee the following extract from a letter I have received from Edward Buxton this morning. ‘I heartily wish you could be in London now. My father is just finishing his second book, and daily and hourly wants such a secretary as you to correct his sheets and help in the work. You know how much he wants assistance, and now he has neither Andrew

nor Priscilla, and I am so much occupied that I can do nothing for him. I believe your coming to London for a month or two just now would have been of *essential service* both to him and the great cause, and he would certainly have asked you to come but that he fears your father would not like it.

“I say this entirely on my own account, and in no way by the direction of my father; but I could not bear to let you go on at Darlington doing nothing of importance without letting you know that you might give my father material help, and save him a great deal of work in London.’

“This is all Edward wrote on the subject. I send it then in order that thou may see precisely how the matter stands. I will add the reasons which would have induced me to go off to London to-morrow, if I had not disliked to act without thy knowledge and permission. I will take the least important first. It would be very pleasant to myself; here I am laboriously kicking my heels—diligent by doing nothing; there I should be hard at work at the subject in which of all others I am most interested. I should be of help to my uncle, repay him in some measure for his many acts of kindness; for I do not at all doubt that he really does wish me to come up, and is prevented from asking me himself, solely because he does not wish to interfere between thee and me. These, however, are reasons which I ought not to allow, and which I trust I do not allow to weigh for one moment against the wish of the kindest and most affectionate of fathers, who has already sacrificed for his son far more than he ought, and to whom I owe more than I ever can to any other person.

“My main reason is that I do really believe I should be giving some aid, however slight, in the great cause.

“In writing to thee I need not dwell upon my duty to do my utmost against the slave trade; thou hast thyself always inculcated it in me; nor would I for a moment be supposed to lay claim to any credit for being willing to do my part. I know too well how many selfish and unworthy motives tend to bring about this willingness; but they do not weaken the force of the duty. . . .

“I may just explain where I think I should be of aid. I should be able to give some little assistance to my uncle, lessen the time which it takes to bring his plan before the public; and so fully am I convinced of its probable success, if allowed a fair trial, that I feel as if every day in which this trial is unnecessarily delayed may cause the loss of hundreds of lives.

“While I write this I feel this conviction so strong, that I can hardly restrain myself from going off to-night.

“But this is not all;” he then urges all the reasons for believing he might serve his uncle and “the cause,” and the letter concludes: “I have *written warmly* because I have long *felt warmly*, and I trust I shall long continue to do so; but I do hope I have not written either unkindly or undutifully. Pray forgive me if I have, I am sure I did not mean it.

“I can only add that I trust thou wilt send ever so short an answer by the next post after thou gets this; if it be an approval, I shall thank thee most heartily, and be very heartily delighted; if it be not, I must confess it will be a bitter disappointment, but I know that it will be from a view, though I cannot but think a mistaken one, for my good; but I trust it will not be so.

“I shall ask my mother to forward this if thou be not returned, and to let me know where thou art. If I do not hear from thee in the time in which thou wilt be able to write, I shall suppose that silence gives consent, and set off immediately, for if left to myself I should not delay one instant.”

All the ardour of the young man who sees the way opening into a life towards which his tastes and aspirations are driving him, is breathed forth in this letter. But once again the father's cautious temperament clashed with the son's ideas and ambitions. The former's chief wish on behalf of the latter at this time was that he might obtain a clerkship, of which there seemed to be a prospect, in a bank in London. He failed to see that his son would be brought any nearer to the realization of this object by his temporary employment as his uncle's secretary, and he placed a firm veto upon the proposal. It must have been a heavy blow to Forster, whose entreaties in the letter just quoted are pathetic in their unconscious vehemence. Yet he submitted to it with that dutiful obedience to the wishes of his parents which was never known to fail.

“Darlington, July 8th, 1839.

“MY DEAREST FATHER,

“I hasten to reply to thy very affectionate letter received this morning. I am sorry that my letter has given you both so much pain—very sorry; but, taking into account my views and feelings, I do not well know how I could have written otherwise. However, I do most heartily hope you will think no more about it. . . .

“Pray do not admit for a moment the notion that thy motives are misunderstood, or that any person suspects thee of any coolness on the slave trade. I trust that I shall never be

insulted by hearing any such suspicion, nor do I believe that any person thinks it.

“At any rate, I understand thy motives, and know that it has been a real trial to thee, in fulfilling what thou believes to be thy duty as my father, to do anything which may be disagreeable to me.” . . .

There are few who will not feel that it must have been hard for the generous and high-spirited lad, whose whole soul was burning with the desire to enter upon public work, to have to write in this strain almost on the eve of his twenty-first birthday. A far more revolutionary scheme than that of becoming private secretary to his uncle had now, however, been born of his youthful restlessness. The Niger expedition was being prepared for. His uncle had asked him if he knew of any one fit to lead it, and he had suggested among the men whose personal qualities seemed to render them eligible for such a post, Sir Edward Parry and Sir John Ross. “Latrobe, the traveller,” also seemed to him to be such a man as was wanted. But followers as well as leaders were needed in the perilous expedition, the success of which was now the dearest object of Forster’s life. So (July 7th, 1839) he writes to his uncle as follows:—

“Darlington, 7th, 7th mo., 1839.

“. . . One word as to myself. On reading that thou proposed that agents should be sent with the autumn expedition by the philanthropic company, it flashed across my mind, if I am fit to take any part in this great work, is not this my place ?

“I did not mention the subject in my last letter, because I thought it best to write about one thing at a time, and I did not wish to write hastily. The idea has, however, gained ground with me ever since, and I now offer myself as one of the agents.

“As it transgresses none of my principles, and the engagement would only be for a limited time, I think it is a case in which I have a right to exercise my own judgment. So far as regards myself, I have calculated the difficulties and dangers, and am willing to run the risk. I very probably, however, am not fitted for the office, and it may be the height of presumption for me to have the smallest notion that I am; and if that be so, pray tell me, and there ends the matter. Still, I cannot help thinking that there might be an advantage in the philanthropic agent being a peace man. . . .

“Surely the philanthropic agent could be of great use, not only in obtaining all kinds of information, but in standing up for just principles during the making of the treaties, and endeavouring to make the natives understand our anti-slave trade views. Could he not be in some measure the representative of the philanthropic interest, and that of course without stepping out of his place or in any way interfering with the duties of the government officer? Whether I am fit to be such agent is quite another question.

“Never fear about my health. I have faith the climate would not kill me. (By-the-bye, ‘I have a nephew there,’ would not be a bad *argumentum ad hominem* for thee to use on behalf of the climate.)

“As for money, I should be supported while engaged, and that is all I want. All I bargain for is present independence, and not to be asked to fight myself or to help others to fight. If those two requisites are secured, I care not by whom I am sent out. Thou wilt not be surprised at my being anxious for thy opinion on this matter, as soon as thou hast time.

“I may just add that the next week or two must be the turning-point in my life. If I be not speedily *committed* to the slave trade cause, I shall be committed to something else, and obliged, in great measure, to give it up. My stay here cannot be much longer, and a person one-and-twenty years old must, of course, find some way of keeping himself, and, when once in any business, I must give up my time to it. And it will be impossible to get out.

“With care, I trust, I should not meet with much opposition from my parents; but if thy opinion be in any respect favourable, I will write more on that head.

“Thy affectionate nephew,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Mr. Buxton demurred to the proposal, but did not at the moment negative it; so Forster writes again, the day being his twenty-first birthday:—

“Darlington, 11th, 7th mo., 1839.

“MY DEAR UNCLE,

“. . . With regard to Africa, I deserve no credit for my proposal, because it really was my wish, and still continues to be so; though thy letter makes me see that I cannot go just yet, and that when I do go the responsibility must and ought to rest entirely on myself. However, I am of course all the more anxious to do what I can at home, and if I really

can be of any help to thee the next few months in London, I am determined, if possible, I will. . . . I may add, and I do not mind to whom thou mention it, that I am both willing and wishing to give up all my time to the slave trade, and to take any post for which thou mayst think me fitted, and which is not at variance with my religious scruples, and by which I can live independently so long as I am engaged."

By way of postscript to this letter is a note to the Cottage ladies:—

"MY DEAR COTTAGE AUNTS,

"If you see this, I just add this to say that I do think you are the kindest aunts ever nephew had. Your packet of letters was the first thing I saw this morning, and a most auspicious beginning of my manhood it was.

"I was just beginning a letter, when there comes a note from Hannah Backhouse, with whom I dined, summoning me for a birthday sermon, I suppose, and as it is now half-past nine, I shall have no time now.

"Yours most affectionately,

"W. E. F."

The end of the proposal that he should go to the Niger and share the dangers of the actual expedition, as he had shared in the heavy labours connected with its birth, is to be read in a brief note from Mr. Fowell Buxton, dated September 27th, 1839. "I have a decided and inflexible opinion," says the writer, "that you must not go to Africa. In the first place, I really could not bear the anxiety I should have to endure on your account, and the injury I should have been the means of doing your parents. Secondly, I firmly believe that you would be of more use to the cause here, provided you are permitted to attend to it, than you would be if you were in Africa; in short, to the Niger you go not with my consent." So there was an end of the scheme which, if it had been carried out, would probably have sent the man who was destined by Providence to be the author of the Education Act, to perish prematurely on the West Coast of Africa. The story of the Niger expedition is almost forgotten now. It can be retold in few words. The movement in its favour excited widespread enthusiasm. On June 1st, 1840, a meeting was held in its support in Exeter Hall, at which Prince Albert presided. Shortly afterwards Mr. Buxton received a baronetcy as a special mark of the favour with which both the Queen and

the Government regarded his exertions on behalf of the people of Africa; and eventually, on April 14th, 1841, the expedition sailed. It consisted of three vessels, the *Albert*, the *Wilberforce*, and the *Soudan*, commanded respectively by Captain Trotter, Commander William Allen, and Commander Bird Allen. In due time the vessels reached the Niger, the waters of which were explored for more than 300 miles from the coast, and communications opened with the natives of the country. For a season all went well; but then fever appeared among the crews, and after a brief but gallant fight against it, the vessels had to retire. Of the 301 persons who composed the expedition, 41, including Commander Bird Allen, succumbed to disease, and the noble and well-meant enterprise ended in a disastrous failure.

CHAPTER V.

BRADFORD.

FORSTER'S position at this time is made quite clear by his letters. He was drawn in opposite directions, by his personal tastes and ambition, and by the necessity which was laid upon him of making a living for himself. Writing in the spring of this year, 1839, to Barclay Fox, he said:—

“I am in a regular Cornish skew as to the future, like that thou and I were favoured with when we astonished the natives at Sidmouth—can't see an inch before me. I want to be at something in the way of getting a living, but don't know precisely what to be at. Uncle B.'s book is out—my part of it so incorporated with the rest that it is difficult to say which is which. The main part of what I wrote for him is in what is not yet printed. I am getting pushed forward in these matters quite as much as I like; or, rather, I like taking part in them so much that I do quite as much as is good for me, for my principal object must yet be to make myself independent—that is plain. What a bother this forced worship of Mammon is! However, I am heartily glad that thou art playing at it so steadily and to good purpose, too.”

We have seen how his work in Darlington was practically done. On July 19th, with the consent of his parents, he went to London, his plans for the future being still unformed. An arrangement was made soon afterwards, in accordance with which he entered for a time the office of Messrs. Sanderson, Fry, and Fox, in the Old Jewry, in order that he might acquire some knowledge of counting-house work and business correspondence. Before this arrangement had been made, however, he suffered, in common with the rest of the wide family circle, a heavy bereavement. His aunt, Miss Sarah Buxton, one of the two “Cottage ladies” of whom such frequent mention has been made, and whose interest in Forster's career had been so warm and unceasing, died suddenly. She was at the time

(August, 1839) at Bristol, with her loved "partner" and friend, Miss Anna Gurney. The latter desired to bring the remains home for burial in the churchyard at Overstrand, hard by the cottage which had been so long their home, and at her request William Edward Forster was sent to be her companion on the sad journey. Those who knew him best in later years were best acquainted with the womanly tenderness of his nature, the depth and the warmth of his sympathy with the sorrowful. The following letter, written when he and Miss Gurney were nearing the end of their painful journey, is worthy of being preserved, because of the light which it throws upon this side of his character:—

"Barton Mills.

"MY DEAREST PARENTS,

"Thus far are we on our sad journey. We left Oxford at five this morning; got here at ten. Cousin Anna is rather tired with her long journey, but not ill. She has gone to bed and to sleep. She is nervous just now, Hannah says, but she has been wonderfully supported throughout, and has been kept quite calm. I cannot help being very anxious, but I trust and fully believe we shall get to the end well. We intend to rest to-morrow, and I am sure we want it, and to start very early on second day morning, so as to get to the Cottage by the middle of the day. I have written fully to Asker at the Swan about the horses, thinking you might possibly be at Northrepps; but if my father is not, perhaps he would call and read it.

"With regard to your meeting Cousin A., I hardly know what to say. On the one hand is her *wish* to see you and my knowledge that both of you would do her good, and on the other her fear and my fear of new excitement, especially before the great trials of entering the Cottage. I think not only are you best able to judge for yourselves—for my dearest mother—but for us too, and you must do so. . . .

"I am very well; rather tired, for I was up a little after four, and I must sit up for the Magnet, for I dare not trust the people at the inn, and Spinks, poor fellow! must have sleep, not having had it for nights; but I am not knocked up at all. This is indeed an afflicting, but a satisfying journey.

"Your very affectionate son,

"W. E. FORSTER."

At the close of the year we find him engaged in his new work at Messrs. Sanderson, Fry, and Fox's, all hope of a place

in the Niger expedition having been given up, but not, as will be seen, all interest in "the great cause."

"6, Old Jewry, 14th, 12th mo

"MY DEAREST PARENTS,

". . . I settled in last second day. That evening I spent at the Brewery. Next morning I breakfasted there. Third day evening I went up to an aborigines committee at Dr. Hodgkin's.

"Fourth day evening there was a large young party at Brick Lane. Fifth day afternoon I went with Sir G. Stephen to Aylesbury, to an anti-slavery meeting there. I do not know whether thou wilt hear of it from G. W. Alexander, but in case thou dost I may as well say I entirely disapprove and wash my hands of all Sir G.'s attack upon the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, though I greatly approved of his praise of our plan. I preached to him all the way down to no purpose. I should have disowned publicly on my uncle's part that part, but it seemed hard to fly in the face of one's friend, especially seeing he was beat, but I did privately to Lord Nugent, to Alexander, and to the leading people at Aylesbury.

"I went from London by the three o'clock train, and returned to London by half-past nine yesterday. Seeing I have been very diligent in business, I do not think it was an unwarrantable excursion.

"Last evening I was at home, and so I shall be this. . . . I should be glad of my chess men, Shakespeare, and Percy's 'Reliques.'"

To BARCLAY FOX.

"6, Old Jewry, December 20th, 1839.

"MY DEAR BARCLAY,

"My silence has been shameful. I confess and repent. In fact so much so, that I should not think of relieving the gnawings of conscience by a base pecuniary mulct; moreover, to give to a society I disapprove by way of punishment to myself, is a sort of doing evil that good may come that suiteth not my present philosophical enlightenment. The fact is, I am and always shall be a bad letter-writer, but I trust I shall improve under this fourpenny dispensation. . . .

"Here am I in the house of one Samuel Theobald, draper and Quaker, having the same lodgings as in days of yore thou

mayst have known as occupied by the two Leathams, one after the other.

“I dine at chop houses when I do not visit, and find myself in breakfast and tea,—and am gradually falling into the habits of that selfish sullen and truly wild, because most undomestic animal, a bachelor. *Pray* do have some most urgent business to call thee speedily to town; there is nothing that would give me so much pleasure as to see thee, I have so many things. I should be so glad to talk to thee about. I fought hard to get another bed, with especial reference to thy sojourn in it, in thy visits to Babylon, but that I found impossible. Of course thou wilt not neglect the bounden duty of yearly meeting; and I hope to see thee long before that. I find, upon looking into Genesis, that Cain built the first city, which, as he was possessed by the Evil One, very much confirms my previous notion that the Devil invented cities. Nevertheless, London has its advantages, and I had much rather live in it than in another city. And, indeed, in this short life of mine, my settlings have been so various and unsettled, that I begin to take a change with great nonchalance, putting confidence in my mother’s hymn—

‘A fig for the cares of this whirligig world;’

and still, repeat said hymn as often as I will, there is no getting rid of the too true fact that this life is a struggle; at least I find it so, and a pretty hard one too. My leisure time continues pretty fully occupied with African concerns, and I must now leave off and go to see a true hearty old Navy Captain, Owen, who has knocked about Africa half his life, and has given me an invitation to call any hour between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m.

“Thine for good and I fear for bad also,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Throughout the year 1840 he remained at his post in London. The fact that he was living in town enabled him to take a more active part than he had done at Darlington in connection with his uncle’s philanthropic work. We find him accordingly referring in his correspondence to the various meetings he has been attending in connection with the African project, and discussing the opium traffic and the opium war with warmth and vigour in his letters to Miss Elizabeth Pease, with whom he maintained the friendship he had formed at Darlington. His original lodgings with the Theobalds did not satisfy him, and he moved to a more open and healthy position at Hamp-

stead. There is a passage in a letter to his mother, written shortly before his removal to these new lodgings, which bears testimony to that affection for animals which he retained to the last. "I have a most delightful black kitten sitting in my easy chair just now; a most refined, graceful, intellectual, amusing puss. In fact, she is altogether the charm of the habitation, and when I march off, which I shall do ere long, I shall elope with her in my pocket."

"The turning-point in his life," to which he had often referred in previous years, may be said actually to have come in this year 1840. Mention has been made of the fact that his father had strong hopes of being able to obtain for him a place in one of the London banks. It was really with a view to his qualifying for this that he had taken the place in London which he now filled. But all hopes of this kind were brought to an end in October, 1840, when it was found that no opening could be made for him in the bank in question.

His uncle, on becoming aware of this, offered Forster a place in his brewery. This offer—made at a time when he was in much perplexity as to his future course—was gratefully declined, because Forster felt that he could not conscientiously adopt brewing as a means of gaining a livelihood. It was generous on the uncle's part, when he wrote to his nephew after this refusal, to add the words, "I hold, however, still the conviction that you will never regret having acted under a conscientious impression." There were other businesses besides that in beer, where conscientious scruples came in to interfere with the ordinary dictates of self-interest. The following letter from the uncle to the nephew refers to a proposal that the latter should enter a manufacturing concern which carried on a trade in slave-grown produce.

"Northrepps Hall, near Aylsham,
"November 9th, 1840.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,

"I have hardly felt able to answer your private note, and yet it would be unfair to be silent.

"I really do not know how I should act with regard to a business in slave-grown produce. I certainly should be slow to entwine my interests with any slave system, and should have a greater degree of scruple than with regard to joining a brewery. All this only proves how impossible it is for one person to judge of the scruples of another. All I can say is (and it applies to all cases of perplexity), pray it out.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"T. F. BUXTON."

But the period of doubt and uncertainty as to his future, which had pressed so hardly upon him up to this period in his life, was now to close. It was in the winter of 1840-41 that he turned his eyes northwards to Yorkshire, and found a sphere which, both from the business and the political point of view, was worthy of his immense energy, at Bradford. Some time before Mr. Forster, senior, in the course of one of his mission journeys, had met Mr. Thomas Fison, head of the wool-stapling business of James Fison and Son, of Thetford, Norfolk. They were fellow-travellers in a stage coach, had fallen into conversation with each other, and had discovered that each was in some perplexity as to the future course of a son. Mr. Fison was a member of the Wesleyan body, and Mr. Forster found in him a congenial spirit. The acquaintance formed in the stage coach was kept up, and eventually it led to communications passing between the two men which resulted in William Edward Forster going to Bradford to join Mr. T. S. Fison, a son of Mr. James Fison, in business there as a wool-stapler.

Among the manufacturing towns of Yorkshire, Bradford has always held a distinctive place. The energy and quickness of its inhabitants were noticed long ago by Thoresby, the historian, and contrasted with the comparative lethargy of the neighbouring people of Leeds. Both politically and commercially, Bradford was beginning to "make its way in the world" when young William Edward Forster first entered it, there to begin the battle of life on his own account, somewhere in the summer of 1841. The records which remain of the early part of his career in Bradford are comparatively slight. He began life there, as has been stated, as a partner in the business of Mr. T. S. Fison, and he lived in the first instance in lodgings in the town of Bradford.

In 1842 he added to his responsibilities by joining Mr. William Fison in partnership as a woollen manufacturer, under the name of William Fison and Company. The connection with Mr. T. S. Fison was continued for some years; but it was to the manufacturing concern in which Forster had Mr. William Fison as his partner that he chiefly devoted his energies; and in the year 1849 he withdrew from the wool-stapling business, and confined himself exclusively to his partnership with Mr. William Fison. That gentleman still survives; and the business in which he and Mr. Forster were so long engaged is now carried on by their sons, Mr. Frederick W. Fison and Mr. E. P. Arnold-Forster.

There can be no doubt, from the traditions which still

linger in Bradford, that the future representative of the town in the House of Commons attracted a considerable amount of attention, almost from the commencement of his residence in the place. Of great stature, altogether unconventional in manner, and singularly indifferent to outward appearances, his was a figure which was certain to strike even the most careless of observers. Perhaps some of the legends regarding his appearance at that time have suffered exaggeration in the passage of the years; but there can be no doubt that there was much about him in the year 1841 to arouse the curiosity of those who met him for the first time in Bradford.

"We distinctly remember," says a writer in the *Bradford Times*, April 25th, 1868, "his first coming to Bradford in 1841, and the sensation he produced among the gentlemen standing on the steps of the old Exchange, just opposite to the then busy Piece Hall, as he took the aforementioned two or three steps at one bound, and passed with the rapidity of a steam locomotive or a racer into the large Exchange room. Many were the inquiries made as to who the curious-looking stranger really was? Where did he come from, and what was his business there? It oozed out, however, in the course of a few moments, that it was Mr. Thomas Fison's new wealthy partner, and numerous were the reports as to his pedestrian capabilities and his *love of books*—the latter being a very rare characteristic of a Bradford wool-stapler at the period to which we refer."

Even in his later years Forster was far too much occupied with the graver realities of life to trouble himself about his own appearance. In those early days he impressed his new acquaintances almost as much by this absorption in his work and its accompanying disregard for mere externals, whether of dress or manners, as by the remarkable ability of which he showed himself to be possessed. To the end of his life he preserved to a certain degree those characteristics which aroused interest and curiosity when he first settled at Bradford. He was apt to be absent-minded, for when any subject engaged his attention he devoted his whole thought to it. He was unquestionably careless in his dress, and he was at times very blunt in his speech. It is, perhaps, a misfortune for any man to possess these outward characteristics; for too many persons in this world are inclined to judge men by externals merely. It was undoubtedly a misfortune when these characteristics were found in one whose destiny it was to follow the thorny path of the politician, where tact, suavity of manner, and a keen regard for the susceptibilities of those

around him are almost essential to a man's success. But, after all, these externals are merely external; and Forster's early friends in Bradford soon discovered, as in later life the world at large did, that beneath the somewhat rough and unvarnished exterior was hidden one of the warmest hearts in the world, and a nature as truly sensitive as it was loyal and pure.

The business connection of Mr. Forster and Mr. Fison, which began in 1842, ended only with Mr. Forster's death. The two partners began as young men on borrowed capital and amid many adverse circumstances. They had to face many seasons of anxiety and depression. They were men themselves opposed in political opinions and in their views upon many of the questions of the time. Yet from the first day to the last of that long partnership an unbroken amity reigned between them, and the surviving partner now bears his grateful testimony to the fact that never during their whole connection did a word, or even a look that was unfriendly, pass between Forster and himself. Testimony more honourable to both men could hardly be desired. It is as well that this should be said now, when we are dealing with the opening phases of Mr. Forster's business life in Bradford, because to say it here will prevent unnecessary reiteration in the future course of the narrative. The two young men who were thus launched upon life together seemed to find, even in their very differences, reasons for mutual sympathy and agreement, and together they fought their way, with an English tenacity of purpose, from comparative poverty to positions of wealth and comfort. It is due to Mr. Fison to say that, if Mr. Forster had met with a less kindly and considerate partner, his political career must have been greatly hindered and his own honourable ambition to a large extent thwarted. His own letters, with which the reader is already familiar, show that with all his natural yearning for political life, he was cut off from the achievement of the ends at which he aimed by the straitness of his means and the necessity laid upon him of making a position for himself in the world. To work for the public good was his passion, and from his youth upwards there was never a day when he lost an opportunity which presented itself of gratifying this desire of his soul. But before he could give himself wholly to public objects and to public life, it was necessary that he should win for himself at least a moderate competence. This end he achieved by means of his business career at Bradford. It was a career honourable to himself in all its aspects, as will be seen during the course of this narrative. But his way was smoothed, and his burden lightened, by the constant loyalty and

kindness of the friend whom he had been so fortunate as to secure for a partner.

The Bradford mill where the two young men began their business career occupied a portion of the site of the present Swan Arcade. Very soon after arriving in Bradford, Mr. Forster went to lodge at a hamlet called Bolton, a short distance from the town, in the house of Mr. Gaunt, a farmer. There was a malting attached to the farmhouse, and here his mother, on the occasion of her frequent visits to her son, was in the habit of holding religious meetings, which were largely attended, and are still held in remembrance by the older inhabitants of the district. The people of Bradford were not slow to discover that in the young manufacturer who had just come among them they had received a notable addition to the life and society of the town. Many interesting anecdotes, illustrative of his characteristic personality, are still current in Bradford. As has been said, he was not a man who could be easily passed over, even by a casual observer.

It is somewhat remarkable that both in his figure and his manner he partook largely of the characteristics of the people of the West Riding. Those who only knew him in later life found it hard to believe that he was not by birth a Yorkshireman. Indeed, he has been described by some anonymous critic as having the appearance of a stage Yorkshireman in the House of Commons. It was not in the West Riding, however, that he acquired those outward characteristics which savoured so highly of the genius of the place. He inherited them from his father's family. There is little doubt that the Forsters originally came from the Yorkshire dales, and it is no far-fetched fancy to assume that in his bluntness of speech, in his indifference to personal appearance, and in his physical stature and character, he furnished an example of the revival of a type of some far-away dalesman ancestor.

In a letter to his mother, dated August 22nd, 1841, he gives some account of a walking tour in Scotland, which he had made during his first holiday after going to Bradford. "I enjoyed my walk very much—grand wild scenery. I went from Inverness to the west coast of Rosshire, and then along the coast to Cape Wrath, the northernmost point of Scotland, and from thence by Tongue to Caithness, a part not much visited by tourists or sportsmen, and therefore exhibiting much of the characteristic manners of the Highlanders. I got to one small inn, where even the landlady could speak no English." Now, as in his youthful days at Bridport, Forster was an enthusiastic pedestrian, and very soon after settling

in Bradford his walking powers had become notorious. Whilst he was still engaged in the business of Mr. T. S. Fison, and before he entered upon his partnership with Mr. William Fison, the housekeeper of the former gentleman overheard a mason, who was at work at the mill, scolding an apprentice in words which are still remembered. "Thou idle hullet (owlet), thou shouldst stir thysen. Be like Long Forster, what walked to Colne and back" (thirty miles) "before breakfast." This physical activity of his was noticeable all through his life; but the reader will have ample opportunity of judging for himself of his powers when the story is told of his travels in various parts of Europe and the East. It was natural, and indeed inevitable, that during the early years of his business life Forster's energies should chiefly be given to the occupation in which he was engaged. He was never a man to do anything by halves, and he threw himself into his business as a wool merchant and manufacturer of Bradford stuffs with the enthusiasm which was characteristic of his nature.

His beginning of a career as a Bradford merchant seemed to form a break in the continuity of his life. New fields of work were opened to him, and his sympathies were drawn into new channels. The old feelings on the subject of slavery were not, indeed, dismissed from his mind; but now that an active life in a great manufacturing community brought him daily into contact with the working-classes, the current of his thoughts began to change. The claims of the poor at his own door began to press upon him more closely even than those of the oppressed and outraged negroes. The great social and political problems of our time forced themselves upon his attention, and overshadowed those purely philanthropic projects which had absorbed his interest hitherto. Carlyle's writings exercised their fascinating influence over his mind, and every day of his life during his first decade at Bradford seemed to be marked by a new stage in the growth of his active interest in the social politics of the time. A reminiscence of him, soon after he entered upon his life in the West Riding, is given in a letter written after his death by the Rev. W. Philpot, and I quote it here, though it looks so far ahead in Forster's life: "I learned to value him forty-two years ago. Some of us, among whom were Bradley and Plumtre, were reading in the summer at Cromer. I happened to be dining at Northrepps, with the old Sir Fowell. After dinner, I was left with a man five or six years older than I was, acting as private secretary. I can see him now, standing with his back to the fire—tall, animated, earnest, forward-looking—and hear

him as he poured out with a fervour and a knowledge that was quite new to my experience, such a racy and original strain of talk about the interests of the people, that I was quite carried off my legs with delight, and I said to myself, 'You will make your mark.' When I got home, I took notes—meagre enough; headings and catch-words for memory—of what he had been saying. My last impression of him was, as he stood like a pillar behind the Speaker's chair (he had got me into the House), while the Irishmen who remained after the others had been turned out, were aiming their *bruta fulmina* at him. . . . My inward anticipation at Northrepps found a range beyond my imagination."

For a time after going to Bradford, he felt himself in a decidedly uncongenial atmosphere. The majority of those around him were too deeply immersed in the pursuit of wealth to have either leisure or inclination for purely intellectual pursuits. Yet almost from the first he found one or two congenial friends and associates in the place. Among these must be mentioned Mr. Lythall, a manufacturer, and a man of genial and refined mind, with whom he formed a close intimacy; Mr. Horsfall, another business man, who had many foreign connections, and through whom he was brought in contact with the life and thought of more than one continental country; and Mr. William Byles, the proprietor and editor of the *Bradford Observer*, who remained his staunch and valued friend down to the day of his death, and who still happily survives. But after all, during those early years of his residence in Bradford, his chief friendships were with his own family circle. He kept up a constant correspondence, not merely with his father and mother, but with the Buxtons and with Barclay Fox. It is to Barclay Fox that he writes from Bradford as follows:—

"I have been confined to my room these last three days, by sore throat, and have meditated much on thy letter and its queries. My meditations are no ways clear, on the contrary, most muddy, but such as I can give, I send thee." (Here follows a long disquisition on the question of inspiration, concluding with the statement, "My idea of the inspiration of the Scriptures is what I imagine to be Coleridge's.") "Thanks for 'Man and the Reformer.' I had read it in the *Dial*. I admire the principle much, but not the practice. Thou must by all means get the *Dial*. Almost every article is worth reading. Emerson is by no means the essence of it. There are other quite distinct and independent minds. In that same fourth number there is a striking and most powerful

article on the Unitarian movement in New England—curiously orthodox—showing the difference between Unitarianism, Pantheism, and Trinitarianism, and declaring for the latter. These transcendental writings have suggested to me some ideas, which I should like to suggest to thee; but this letter is already far too long, and I must wait for the next.

“By-the-by, I have sent, by Christiana Hustler, Bamford’s works to Sterling, which I shall be obliged to thee to give him.”

It was through the Fox family that Forster had made the acquaintance of Sterling, an acquaintance which subsequently led to his forming some of the most valued friendships of his life.

To BARCLAY FOX.

“Bradford, March 22nd, 1842.

“DEAR BARCLAY,

“‘For our country and friends
Let us damn private ends.’

Jacobite Minstrelsy.

“Being entirely tired of communing with my most unbearable self, for self-communion is pure running round in a circle, an everlasting reciprocity of dulness, I am constrained for self-relief to write to thee, being the easiest mark whereat I can shoot forth this same dulness, and having neither fact nor sentiment of my own, the above strikes me as an appropriate text on which to hook my moralizings, being in truth a pretty fair description of my present condition.

“For like as these homeless moneyless Jacobites, having their own selfish hopes and projects ruined, yet being forced by the nature of man to continue hoping and scheming, burst forth into exuberant devotion to cause and country; so I, having, to say the least, come to a stop in life, or rather walking I know not where—all mist before my vision, ‘skewed up,’ nothing certain, except that sooner or later, whichever way I go, I must walk over the precipice—do feel myself most wonderfully possessed by philanthropic patriotism and friendship, actually to such a degree that my anxiety for thy welfare includes not only soul and mind, but also body, and I have fears lest the profligacy of our last night, backed by thy Truro wetting, may have increased the chalkiness of thy countenance even more than is desirable, and brought upon me the maledictions of sisters and parents; so please satisfy my scruples on that head.

“Again, my love to my own country, or rather fear for it, is just now exceeding. In sober truth, Old England does look in an awkward plight. She appears to me to have divers ugly symptoms.

“1. The increasing disproportion of property, growing value and power of capital, and difficulty to get it except by means of capital—the weight preventing the poor man from rising becoming more and more heavy—all tending to widen the distance between the labourers and the property men, and making the poor man more and more provoked with the rich man *because he is rich*.

“2. The population increasing at the rate of a thousand a day, with no war or cholera to drain off. In truth many a man has little else to do, certainly nothing pleasant to do, except to get children.

“Up to a certain point misery and procreation appear to go or rather grow hand in hand.

“Last and worst. Demand for labour decreasing, at any rate not keeping pace with production of labour, and consequent growth of poverty amongst the masses, even to the extent of wide-spreading hunger, and this same hunger is apt to beget convulsion.

“All this lies on the surface, and is plain to truism, but I do believe the plainer facts are, the less they are seen—nine men out of ten are surprised by the fact of death: so shall we be surprised at convulsion when it comes.

“Nor, indeed, granting the powers that be, knowledge of the evil and will to remedy, do I see how they can help matters materially.

“The weight of vested rights, legal restrictions, long-established privileges, etc., has become so mighty a burden on John Bull’s back, that it will break if not tossed off; and how toss off a bundle so compact without a tumble head over heels, I know not. My only hope is that he will choose a soft place to tumble in, and altogether perform the operation in a tolerably Christian spirit. . . .

“I am reading Carlyle vehemently, have ordered the ‘Miscellanies,’ and got ‘Sartor Resartus,’ which, to my surprise, I like, and have the presumption to think I can sometimes understand. I can pardon him everything but his hard words; but Satan pokes his finger into all human works, and in Carlyle these breakjawisms evince his handywork. . . .

“His pictures are, indeed, pre-eminently true, strong, and vivid, each line glares with light, it *will be seen*. As to the matter of his writings, my conception of them must as yet be

the most superficial guesswork, and probably even after hard study I shall find them too deep for me. Sterling's brilliant, powerful and fine-spirited essay gives a key to much, yet not all, and in some few cases I cannot but think the key does not fit. His doctrine of his simulacra and of sincerity is to me as yet mysterious.

"There is evidently much truth in it, and as certainly some falsehood; but where ends the truth and begins the falsehood, and from what error of vision springs the latter I vainly seek to fathom. Clear-eyed as he is, he seems to me somewhat one-eyed. His very love of truth leads him into error. When he strikes out a truth original, or at any rate unborrowed, he is apt to strengthen and cherish it, till he pampers it into error, or makes it so mighty, that its own place will not contain it, and it takes possession of the territory of some neighbour truth. . . .

"Love to your party,

"Thine ever,

"W. E. FORSTER."

Forster had not yet got a home for himself, but his lodgings at Bolton were something more than merely comfortable. In an extract from the diary of Barclay Fox, describing a visit which he paid to Bradford, he says: "A coach took me to Bradford a little before nine, and at ten I was seated at breakfast with William, before a blazing fire, in unmingled enjoyment. We did talk a little, that's certain—much about the past, more about the future. We drove to meeting in the afternoon, and it was worth attending, if only to meet the kindly face and kindly grasp of Benjamin Seeborn. In the evening one of William's Bradford acquaintances, young Horsfall, looked in, and chatted about Hungary and other foreign parts. . . . His, William's, business, is just now extremely flourishing, and his bachelor establishment is the very ideal of a snuggery. . . . Spent the day quietly with William, riding together to Milner Field, the place he is tempted to take as a residence. I discouraged it. The house is a tempting old hall, enough to set off the imagination; but it will require much repairing and fitting up. It is five miles from Bradford, and the road is very bad."

It was not at Milner Field, but in another part of the district that he eventually set up a home of his own; but, in the mean time, he made his little bachelor establishment the centre of attraction, not only to his own relatives and friends who delighted in availing themselves of any opportunity of

visiting him, but to his acquaintances around Bradford, and to others, whose only claim upon his friendship consisted in their helplessness. The children of the Bolton infant school, for example, shared in his hospitality, and he was never happier than when entertaining those who were in his employment, and doing what he could to make them feel thoroughly at home in the presence of their master.

To his old friend Miss Elizabeth Pease, now Mrs. Nicholl, who had been his fellow-worker in the anti-slavery cause at Darlington, he writes as follows:—

“Bradford, Yorkshire, 11 mo., 3, 1842

“MY DEAR MRS. SEC.,

“Well, it is not for want of thanks to thee for thy letter that I have been so long in answering it, still less for want of loving remembrance of the days when we used to agitate together, when we wielded turn by turn the thunder-bolt of the ‘South Durham British India Society,’ and made the Company and the board of control, and indeed all manner of control whatever, quake before our wrath. I have been intending to answer thy epistle ever since I received it, but the fact is, in the mean time, I have been to the end of Cornwall, and have been very busy, woolly, and stuffy, and in short have been, and am still, a good-for-nothing, lazy, unprofitable youth. However, I am really much obliged to thee for thinking of me, and am measurably obliged to thee for thy parcel of firebrands, though, heretic as I am, I confess as yet I have been satiated with their title-pages. Truth to say, my days of agitation are, I fear, nigh over. I begin to have grave doubts as to the prudence and rightness of the system, and no doubts at all as to the irksomeness of the work. I think I can see thy looks of glancing wrath at my mention of my doubtings. How thou wilt toss up thy head in contemptuous scorn. ‘He have scruples indeed; he has not the wherewithal to found a scruple on! A conscience is a desideratum with him—the selfish, time-serving, ease-loving, Baal-bowing, bale of wool that he is! Well, I always thought he would fall away; he never held fast to the first principles of truth and justice; he always had a touch of expediency, of the old Aldermanbury leaven about him. Would that I were near him to thrash him well with a Garrison cat-o’-nine tails!’ Would that thou wert, too. I should uncommonly like a long talk with thee in thy sanctum, on all and everybody, on Thompson especially. When does he start for India? What is his object? For how

long does he go? Does his wife go with him? Does Brown go with him? Do tell him in thy next letter how glad I should be of a visit from him before he leaves. I would write to him, had I the remotest conception where he was. There is one fact in thy letter which gives me unmixed pleasure, and that is thy own return to health, and that not only on thy own account, but for sake of the cause; for, lazy though I am myself, it gives me unfeigned pleasure to see other folk slaving themselves, especially when their slaving turns to such full account as thine does. However lest thou should think me worse than I am, I must say I am every day more and more struck with a conviction of the fearful state of the masses of our own population, their misery and degradation, and more and more impressed with the necessity that some great effort must be made by those above them to help them. What that effort should be is quite another question; but I do feel as if, could I believe in any scheme for their aid, I could even give up something for such a cause as that. Hast thou read any of Carlyle's works—not Carlile, the infidel, but Thomas Carlyle, decidedly, to my thinking, the highest, or rather the deepest mind of the age? He has all Garrison's earnestness, sincerity, and energy, nearly all his one-sidedness, and ten thousand times his depth of intellect. If thou hast not read his Chartism, begin it at once, with which counsel, and very kind remembrance to thy father and mother, I end this rambling scrawl.

“Thine faithfully,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

In 1844, his father was upon one of his mission journeys on the Continent, and Forster writes to him, inquiring after his fortunes, telling him that trade continues very brisk, and begging him, when at Lyons, to look out for patterns of silks, satins, and worsteds. But he was even then beginning to devote his spare time and thought to those political questions which, for the first few years of his residence in Bradford, he had been compelled to lay aside.

“The country gentry,” he writes to his father, March 3rd, 1844, “are getting up anti-league meetings all the kingdom over. There was a large one at York last week, and nearly £5000 subscribed. All of our manufacturers, John Rand and John Horsfall made speeches. These meetings, and the improvement in trade, will give Sir Robert an excuse for doing nothing, and fling back the abolition of the corn laws a year or two; but come it must, in the end. What the ministers

intend doing with Dan O'Connell is a great puzzle. I think if they meant to punish him, they would have done it at once. Now, after he has been so rapturously received in England, both in the House and out of it, it is very difficult."

The business continued to prosper, thanks to the industry and energy of the young partners, and though they still had their seasons of anxiety, they began to feel the ground secure under their feet. The kindness of Forster's relatives was great and continuous. In 1844, he tells how his uncles Josiah and Robert Forster had lent him a thousand pounds, and thus enabled him and his partner to enlarge their establishment; and in the same year, he announces that his Uncle Buxton has given him a horse, "and a very good one too," in place of one which had not proved so satisfactory.

Public work in Bradford began to fall to his lot. He was placed upon committees of various kinds, and threw himself eagerly into political and social work. Those were hard days for the working classes, and "the condition of England question" was forcing itself upon the minds of all thoughtful men. Forster interested himself deeply in it, and began to weigh many problems for the bettering of the condition of those around him. His inquiring mind led him to seek enlightenment wherever it was to be found; and it was not unnatural that one so full of enthusiasm and so resolute in seeking to probe the sores of society to their very root, should find himself drawn into sympathetic contact with many of the men who, in their abhorrence of the acknowledged evils of society, were seeking to reconstruct our social system from the foundation upwards. Robert Owen, the Socialist, and Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, were among those whose acquaintance he formed, and whose opinions he mastered with avidity. In local political affairs also, he now began to take an active and prominent part. The people of Bradford soon recognized the strength and earnestness of his views upon many of the questions of the day, as well as the vigour with which he sought to carry those views into effect. In an interesting paper on his early days in Bradford,* there is a reference to the part he played at that time in the political strife of the town. "When the election came, he threw his energy into it, and one day headed a troop of rough Irishmen and Chartists, in an expedition to release some Liberal voters locked up by the Tories in an upper room of a public-house, to keep them from voting. No wonder if the new-comer, towering head

* "Mr. W. E. Forster's Early Career." By F. Seebohm, *Contemporary Review*, September, 1866.

and shoulders conspicuously above the rabble around him, came in for his share of remark, earning the passing encomium of 'the devil's ramrod' from the people; whilst his more old-fashioned and cautious friends shook their heads, and doubted whether the young politician might not be too much of a Chartist for them, especially as it was reported that he had declared himself in favour of universal suffrage."

The wise and prudent among the Bradford people were at that time apt to regard with reprobation what they deemed the extravagance of his opinions; but among the working classes he soon made himself a power. They felt, not merely what all who knew him felt, the freshness and originality of his mind, but the sincerity of his sympathy with them in the hard fight which they had to wage with the stern realities of life; and they began to look upon him as one who was destined to become their leader and their teacher.

Yet even among the working classes there were some who were not prepared to go so far as he went. His tried friend and partner, Mr. Fison, recalling his first political speech from the hustings in front of the Court House at Bradford, tells how two men in the crowd were overheard discussing him whilst he was speaking.

"Who is he?" asked one.

"Doesn't ta know? It's Long Forster."

"Ay! he's a rare talker. I always tho't he were un-sensible."

That speech of Forster's, however, made a deep and abiding impression upon Mr. Fison, who felt convinced from that time that his business associate was destined to achieve a place of his own in the political world.

TO BARCLAY FOX.

"Bradford, Yorkshire, November 6th, 1844.

"DEAR BARCLAY,

"Thanks for thy last note, which followed me to Grasmere, where I spent a few most enjoyable days with Uncle Charles and party, barring an attack of tic, which did not much matter when I had Aunt C. and three young ladies to nurse me; but, now that I have Race [his groom] in their place, is troublesome.

"I went over on Saturday to consult the cold-water doctor at Ilkley, but his mode of curing is too long, and besides, very unpleasant—not the treatment—but the living at a large hotel, with a score or two of folk who have nothing on earth

to do but talk or think about their own health or yours. I should die of hyp. in a week. As it is, I came back, fancying all manner of things the matter with me. It is most unhealthy to be constantly examining one's self, either mind, soul, or body. I am writing at the counting-house, and trade is so atrociously flat that it infects my note. I begin to fear that I shall lose money this half year,—the idea of which is disgusting; and what with that and the tic, I feel very philosophical and humble-thoughted.

“My dear mother has been but very poorly; but is better. Write as soon as thou canst.

“With dear love to thy wife,

“Thine ever,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

To MR. and MRS. BARCLAY FOX.

“Bradford, Sunday evening,

“November 17th, 1844.

“DEAR FRIENDS,

“It is in me this evening to send you a joint epistle. I never passed a more quiet fortnight—with one exception all my evenings, and at this season they are long, have been spent alone in my own room. My room really is very snug, about as snug as it can be, and altogether I find charms in my own society beyond what I have hitherto experienced. I hope to persevere through winter in this mode of life, but I cannot get on without letters, as sympathy of some sort I must have; so I hope my friends will be merciful to me. . . .

“If you care to know my mental whereabouts you can glance at my last letter to ——. I can have no secrets from either of you; but as a general rule I think doubts are best not talked about. As Dr. Arnold well says, ‘talking about them, or even against them, gives them form and substance.’ In my case, however, I want to give them form, it was their very vagueness that bewildered me—the fiend eluded my grasp. I think I may venture to say, and that I hope with some thankfulness, that the cloud is cleaving from before me.

“Well, I have been writing as usual all about myself, and yet I do think of you very much.”

To MRS. CHARLES FOX.

“Bolton, 1st day evening, December, 1844.

“MY DEAR AUNT,

“This evening I have come to the end of Dr. Arnold’s life, and the most lovely yet touching account of his death has so vividly recalled this day five weeks when Uncle Charles read it to us at Grasmere, and this with all those most happy days I spent with you, that I feel as if I must talk to thee as far as in my paper lies.

“I have been slow in getting through Dr. A., for I wished to feel every word as I went on. I think I never met with a book at once so pleasant and so profitable. His noble, brave, loving heart, so earnest, yet so humble, so zealous for truth, so charitable to error; his life of constant work, ‘unhasting yet unresting’ (his very pleasure and recreation, labour); his intellect at once so deep and so comprehensive, the contemplation of this rare union of the eye to see, the hand to act, with the heart to feel, and above all the will to direct, is at once both humbling and inspiring. It shows me the use and strength of that which I have, but, alas! makes me bitterly feel that which I have not.

“I know of only two other men, of late years at least, and men of thought rather than of action, who thus worked out their lives ‘ohne hast, ohne rast’—Jeremy Bentham and Goethe. What a trio, a faithful portraiture of these three; their agreements and contrasts would include almost all the phases of at least the European mind. They are fair preachers and representations of the three contending gospels of Expediency, Art, and Christianity.

“I am now studying Goethe with the object of getting a clear idea of the man, which as yet I confess I have not; but so far as I can see, I can hardly imagine a more striking illustration of the power of Christianity to soften and ennoble—the grace of God as contrasted with the graces of humanity—than the comparison of Goethe with such an one as Arnold. . . .

“Do tell me in truth and honesty whether thou dost not find these long egotistical written soliloquies of mine tiresome.

“Thy very loving,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

In 1845 his father went upon a second religious mission to America, and Forster went to Liverpool to see him start—not without some hope that he might be able to dissuade him from his self-appointed task.

To his Mother.

“Bradford, Yorkshire, 24th, 8th mo., 1845.

“. . . I was most anxiously on the look out for any possible chance of escape from the time when I reached him; but I was quickly convinced there was no chance, and before he left, his own feeling that it was right for him to go was so clear that it seemed as though all that could be done was to have faith and trust that he thought right.

“He called Mary Waterhouse in to tell Friends through her that he felt that peace and quiet in going which he could not but believe was not from himself. The same he said to me more than once in very few words, and these in much brokenness, but with so much feeling that I never shall forget them. He told me to tell thee that he had written thee all that words could say, but words could say little of what he felt. . . . All the Friends seemed to look upon my father as the one first to be attended to, which was some comfort. The friends of the passengers left the ship about two, and in about half an hour she steamed off—the sun breaking out so as to let them come on deck. My father had put on his cap and long dressing-gown, and with his noble, feeling countenance was much the most conspicuous person on deck. He told me that I had been a very great comfort to him yesterday, which in some measure repaid me for my great disappointment in not getting to him before.

“I long to hear from thee.

“Thy very affectionate son,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

The affection which he had borne to his parents was diminished in no degree by the engrossing cares of business life, and his compulsory separation from them. During the journeys of his father on the Continent of Europe and in the United States, he visited his mother whenever he found an opportunity of doing so, corresponded with her constantly, and delighted in using the means he now possessed for the purpose of adding to the comforts by which she was surrounded. It was about this period in his life that he made the acquaintance of a gentleman still resident in Yorkshire, who in giving his reminiscences of him at that time says, “My record is worthless for a biographer. It is made up of the little acts of kindness and of love which are the best portions of a good man’s life;” and he goes on to tell how Forster, the busy man of commerce, with his mind full either of business affairs or of

projects for public work, yet found time to visit regularly a house where poverty was an abiding guest, and how the visits became more frequent and the kindness grew as sickness and sorrows made poverty harder to bear. All this remained true of him to his latest days; but there is perhaps no period of a man's life when he is more apt to forget the duty of feeling and showing sympathy with others than at the time when he first has to bear the full brunt of a business man's struggle with the world.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IRISH FAMINE.

IT was Forster's good fortune, whilst he was pursuing the business of a wool-stapler in the West Riding, to make the acquaintance of some men who at the time held a high position in the intellectual world. He had formed an acquaintance with John Sterling through their common friendship with the Fox family; through Sterling he became acquainted with Frederick Denison Maurice, and at a somewhat later period with Carlyle. Evidence has already been given in his letters of the strong attraction which Carlyle's genius and teaching had for him. He differed with him in his views upon many questions, he disliked the peculiar characteristics of his style, he resented his autocratic manner of pronouncing judgment upon the questions with which he dealt; but far outweighing all the reasons for an antipathy towards the illustrious writer, were those which drew Forster into sympathy with him. After Carlyle's death, Forster spoke of him as having been "the greatest modifying force of this century," and it may well be doubted whether upon any public man of his time the author of "Sartor Resartus" had a greater influence than that which he undoubtedly exercised over Mr. Forster.

At the close of 1845 he paid his first visit to Carlyle, who had pledged himself to become his guest at the earliest opportunity. This visit was noticeable because it was the means of bringing Forster into personal relations with a man for whom he formed a warm friendship, and with whom for the rest of his life he continued to maintain the kindest relations. This was Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, whose "Prison Rhyme" had won the admiration of Carlyle, and led him to mention his name to Forster.

Cooper first met Forster at a breakfast given by the latter in London in May, 1846. The Rev. F. D. Maurice, and Mr. Charles Buxton, Forster's cousin, were also present at the

party; and it resulted in an invitation being given to Cooper to go to Yorkshire on a visit to the young manufacturer.

"I visited him there," says Mr. Cooper, "several times in 1846, by his pressing invitation. He drove me up the picturesque valley of the Wharfe, and showed me the sights of the district, Bolton Abbey, Gordale Scar, Malham Cove, Ingleborough, and Great Whernside. We passed the greater part of the time, however, in conversation. I was then forty-one years old, and he was but eight and twenty; yet I found that he had read a great deal and thought a great deal, and had a far wider knowledge of human life, and a much keener insight into human character, than I had possessed at his age. He started no light topics for conversation. He had none of the frothiness which is so often wearisome in the talk of young men in what is called 'highly respectable society.'" Scorning affectation and patronage, he talked with the recently liberated Chartist prisoner on the perfect level of man with man, and with the wise intent of learning all he could, especially of the working classes, from the first educated man who had thrown himself into the struggle for the rights and liberties of the poor. "As I touched sometimes on my own early life battle, he would, with a manly yet tender sympathy, which I cannot easily describe, contrast it with his own happy boyhood in the paternal home at Bradpole, in Dorset, and his delightful visits to the flower-clad Earham, near Norwich, the beautiful seat of Joseph John Gurney, for whom he had great reverence. A reverence which was crowned with enthusiastic admiration, he evidently felt for his illustrious friend Elizabeth Fry. The change in his face was radiant when he described her stately form, the sweetness and thrilling power of her voice, and the vastness of influence she had over every human being with whom she spoke, from the King of Prussia to the vilest criminals in Newgate. By his very lineage and blood, it was natural that my friend's thoughts should often diverge into the sorrowful theme of negro slavery. He talked with a force and vigour unusual even with him when he spoke of that sum of all villainies. His description of the excitement and suffering which the struggle to end it cost his philanthropic uncle, Sir Fowell Buxton, and the cruel and shamefully mercenary opposition that noble and generous champion of the poor blacks had to encounter in the House of Commons, recurs to my memory after all these years. Still more indelibly are impressed on my memory his words of commiseration for suffering Ireland, and the frequency, tenderness, and strength of feeling with

which he expressed his convictions. Education for the people was another very frequent theme in these early conversations. 'If I had to take a part in the administration of affairs in this country,' he would say, again and again, 'I would strive to accomplish two great purposes—to give relief, and lasting relief, to poor Ireland; and to get the children of the working classes out of the gutter, by educating them.'

It was very soon after the conversation in which Forster used these words to Mr. Cooper, that an opportunity was afforded him of rendering signal service to the country with whose people he had so long felt an earnest sympathy, and with which, in future days, his public career was to be so intimately associated. In the summer of 1846, the state of things in Ireland, arising from the failure of the potato crop, became so serious, as to arrest the attention of all parties in England. There is no need to repeat here, even briefly, the history of the great famine. Everybody now knows how, owing to the loss of that which was their staple article of food, vast multitudes of the people of Ireland were reduced to a state which was almost literally one of starvation.

The story of the ghastly mortality of 1846 and 1847, and of all the ills, social and political, which have followed it, may almost be said to be written in blood in our national annals. Hardly a darker page is to be found in the history of the United Kingdom; yet it is consoling to know that, from the first moment at which the attention of the people of Great Britain was called to the actual condition of the starving peasantry of Ireland, the warmest sympathies were awakened on their behalf on this side of St. George's Channel.

The Society of Friends, always foremost in promoting works of practical benevolence, was the very earliest in taking the field for the purpose of combating "the hunger." A committee was formed in London, in the summer of 1846, consisting of members of the society. Funds were subscribed with characteristic liberality, and trusted agents were sent to Ireland to administer the relief which the English Quakers had provided for the suffering Irish Catholics. The chief of these agents was William Forster, who had shown his zeal in the service of his Master in so many fields, and who still had no higher ambition than that of devoting himself to the cause of the poor and the afflicted.

His mission in Ireland, now of historic fame, began in November, 1846. But he was not the first in the field in the work of inquiry and of relief. He was preceded in that work in the month of September by his son. It was the period of

the year at which William Edward Forster was in the habit of taking his annual holiday. His heart had been moved to its innermost depths by the story of the suffering poor, as it was recorded in the daily press, and he resolved to visit Ireland for himself, in part to administer relief, but chiefly to investigate the facts regarding the famine on the spot, in order that he might stimulate public benevolence at home.

No complete record of this his first journey to Ireland remains; but his letters to his father and his friend Barclay Fox supply a sufficiently full account of his experiences. He went to Ireland by way of Dublin, where there were many members of the Society of Friends who were familiar with his name, and from whom he received a warm welcome.

He did not tarry in Dublin, however, but went at once to the heart of the famine-stricken district.

To his Father.

“Cahireiveen, September 20th, 1846.

“MY DEAR FATHER,

“Here I am, in a small wretched town, with the exception perhaps of Dingle, the most westerly town in Europe.

“I had yesterday a tough walk. I took a car to a few miles from Killarney, and then climbed across the shoulder of Carran Tual, the highest mountain in Ireland, which I should have scaled had the fog permitted, and after a toilsome climb of about *twenty* miles, reached a wayside inn, where I stayed till ten, when I was taken up by the one-horse mail-car, which brought me in here about 1.30. The beds of this poor inn were all engaged, but they fitted up a sofa very fairly, and, barring that the door would not shut, and a dog would implore, I managed very fairly.

“The famine is appalling—in the mouths of all persons—quite quelling the natural vivacity of the people. The poor are so entirely dependent on their small holdings, for which they pay (have, in fact, already paid) in labour, whether crop sound or rotten, that with the utmost exertions of the Government and landowners, starvation must, I fear, ensue.

“The failure last year was nothing compared with this, either in degree or extent. So far as I can learn from landowners, farmers, and labourers, the proportion of sound potatoes is not more than one-tenth. Last year in this district the disease was more than compensated by the unusually large produce; but now they are actually gone in the ground, and

those who have bought pigs have not even rotten ones enough to feed them.

“I went into several wretched cabins, where the poor people were bringing in with woe-begone look their scanty, blighted crop. The poor are terribly frightened, especially in districts where there are no neighbouring gentry to encourage and sustain them. They see before them death or robbery.

“I will give an instance in my mountain guide yesterday, whom I picked by chance out of a field—a noble-looking fellow, with a fine forehead, aquiline nose, and stately gait, but with almost no clothes, bare legged—his thighs staring through his tattered corduroys—no shirt. His hire was 6*d.* per day, with diet, paying at that rate in labour £5 per annum for his acre of potatoes, which have entirely failed. A wife and *four* small children; the children earning nothing. He said, ‘We were starving before, we must die now.’ He had been well off, having grazing for *six* cows; but his landlord turned him out, to make the small holdings into votes against repeal. The man, too, who committed this fearful sin, for such it is, though common enough hereaway, ruining a poor man for life for a paltry political purpose, was a Macgillicuddy, one of the old Irish families, who have been masters of the country for many centuries. Yet this poor fellow spoke of him with no bitterness, but merely gave me his story as reason why he was no repealer. ‘Repeal had made him worse than before.’ Pointing to the sheep on the hills, ‘We shall soon be forced to steal them for the children;’ and yet the man had an honest heart. I had all my money about me, a gold watch-chain, and gold spectacles. He must have thought me a mine of riches; and yet I felt myself perfectly safe with him and his great shillelagh amid the cliffs, far from any cabin. He asked me eagerly for tobacco; with that, he could do without his breakfast till evening. ‘I get so vexed for want of tobacco, that I beat the poor children sometimes.’ This admission proved, however, the strength of his natural affection.

“Yesterday they had here their barony meeting. O’Connell, who owns all the land around, and the Knight of Kerry present, and the owner and occupier agreed to undertake public works for this year, under the new Act, to the amount of twenty thousand pounds—one thousand pounds only under the Poor Law valuation of the whole rental. This sum, to be advanced by Government, appears an immense sum for works for the purpose of employment rather than use; but, nevertheless, what will it be for a population of 28,000—almost their sole support for eight months? Taking seven thousand heads

of families at 8*d.* a day, this is £200 a day, and would soon go.

“The distress will be greatest about next March, when, unless Government take other and more vigorous measures, great loss of life must ensue. Surely there will be a national English subscription; and it is a case in which Friends ought to act with vigour, and consider what they can do, and how they can induce others to co-operate. Couldst thou not call a meeting of sufferings at once, to appoint a committee for considering what steps should be taken? If this famine should oblige Friends to take up the condition of the Irish poor, it would be well. At best the whole of this people are slaves to starvation and misery, and this year will be a long middle passage.

“Do read these disjointed notes, which I write as I remember what I have seen and heard, to Uncle Joseph, and think what can be done.

“It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of wages; the landowners making the best, and the farmers and peasantry the worst; but, so far as I can make out, it averages from 8*d.* to 10*d.* per day with diet, in the spring and autumn quarters; and 4*d.* to 6*d.* per day during the rest of the year. Without diet, which is two meals of either potatoes or Indian meal, 2*d.* or 4*d.* more. Owing to the failure of the crop, the farmers are giving up diet here. The public works will probably start this year at 8*d.* without diet. Last year they were 10*d.* If they pay in money, as proposed, instead of Indian meal, at wholesale price, this will not keep the people alive.

“From Dublin to Newcastle and Limerick, I travelled with a highly intelligent gentleman, Captain Kennedy, late secretary of the Devon Company, now agent for Lord Devon’s large estates, and manager of the public works for that district. He gave me a great deal of information, and especially interested me by relating what he had done on his own estate in Donegal, where he had raised four hundred families from misery to comparative comfort by locating them on his waste lands, not without great trouble at first, and some personal danger. This was doing, on a small scale, what Government ought now to compel on a large.

“Limerick was full of soldiers, and so was Rathkeale, a small town on this side; but, curiously, in the only places in which I saw the red coat, I observed large placards in booksellers’ shops, ‘Ejectment processes, etc., furnished, at the shortest possible notice.’

“Last evening and to-day I have been in company with a man of the name of O’Sullivan, agent of a large property here-

away, held by a Leicestershire gentleman of the name of —, and a most courteous communicative man, evidently disposed to do what he can. — owns in fee, or as middle man, immense tracts hereaway, and all the swarming collection of cabins, that caricature of a town, called Cahirciveen. From all I can learn or see, he is far from being a cruel or grasping landlord; but his people are badly off, owing to his easy kindness in allowing an unlimited number of squatters. This, though an injury to the farmer occupiers, is so plainly to his own disadvantage, that it by no means deserves the attack of the *Times*, though certainly his property requires more attention. That these small holdings are not for his own interest is plain enough, from the fact that the poor rates and taxes for public works, and for rents under £5 per annum, are chargeable on the landlords only. The rector of Cahirciveen has not been there for ten years, and gave last year £2 to the relief fund, receiving from the parish £600 per annum. O'Sullivan's rector receives £300, and has given nothing, and never been near his parish. The Irish Church can't stand this.

"I have come this afternoon *eight* miles, about half way to Derrynane, to a clean comfortable wayside inn, Waterville. From Derrynane I intend to go up to Galway, through the most wretched districts I can hear of, determined to learn what I can, though it is a poor journey of pleasure.

"The scenery is magnificent, but to-day soaking wet. . . . With dearest love to my mother,

"Thy very affectionate son,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"They do not even offer me potatoes *at the inn*."

"Tarbert, September 27th, 1846.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I went on to Derrynane on second day morning. I found 'the Liberator,' as his family, friends, and all folks hereaway call him, on his mountains with his hounds hunting, which means in this country walking from one height to another, to see the hunt. He received me with the greatest courtesy and kindness, and spoke with the greatest respect and love of my uncle.

"There was nobody with him but huntsmen, a whole troop of ragged gossoons, and one young fellow, some relation, and his son-in-law, Charles O'Connell, late member for Kerry, a tall, fine, but uncommon fierce-looking fellow.

"I hope my mother will excuse my staying with him through the day, though it was a hunt; but it was worth

much to see a man who, whatever else he is, without doubt has been for long the leader of a nation, and king of the hearts of a people. We breakfasted on the hills, huntsmen and all—green tea, black tea, porter, brandy, punch, milk, great heaps of meat. He was looking better than I expected, certainly much broken from the last year or so, but yet an uncommon fine fellow for his age, seventy-one; striding up the steep craggy mountain, disdaining any help.

He joined heartily in the sport, which is almost his only recreation, and every now and then told me a good story of his past life; but he struck me as looking low and overweighted, and, from several incidental expressions he made use of, I do believe he deeply feels the distress of the people. We went home to dinner about six. His house is a large, ugly, irregular building, in a splendid situation, a fine wooded glen between wild rocky mountains, at the end of a deep creek of the ocean, which, in this south-west corner of the kingdom, is uncommonly grand.

“I think I never saw a place so completely secluded—solitude almost to desolation. The house is like my mother’s description of Irish life—some fine rooms, others wretched; quite a magnificent dining and drawing-room, each thirty-three feet long. We sat down to dinner a large party, but all his own family, with the exception of Dr. Weyland, the Catholic Bishop of Bombay, brother of the Poor Law Commissioner, lately returned, a pleasant, communicative, gentlemanly man, as I suppose most priests of education are.

“O’Connell sat at the top of the table, and his son Maurice, the member for Tralee, at the bottom, a kind, good-natured fellow, with a good deal of humour and plain sense; but not much agitation in him, I should think. There were nine of his twenty-nine grandchildren in the house, and it was very pleasant to see them clustering about their grandpapa, his fondness for them, and their reverential love. There were five girls, all under fourteen; three of them sweet-looking creatures, who declared their determination to be nuns. Soon after dinner we went upstairs, he not accompanying us, but going to his library, as is his custom.

“The morning of the next day I spent in reading, writing, and walking about the grounds with the bishop and two of O’Connell’s daughters. At dinner, we lost the Poor Law man; and had an accession of half a dozen priests. We had a bright talk after dinner, about the pope and slavery, and Dan’s treatment at the nigger meeting, and two or three somewhat tender subjects, which, however, we piloted well through. When I

went up to coffee, I took leave of him, thanking him heartily for his kindness, and for the pleasure my visit had given me.

“I am very much obliged to you,” he replied, with all the courtesy of a gentleman of the old school, which, indeed, is the tone of his bearing in his own house. I left next morning, before seeing him, highly gratified with my stay.

“I do not believe the man to be in the least conscious to himself of insincerity. The loving bond between himself and his family, and dependents, almost proves his heart to be too large for that. I have made a great deal of inquiry in all quarters respecting his tenantry, and I am convinced that the impression made by the reports in the *Times* is most unfair and untrue. I should say he is decidedly the best landlord in his district, but owing to his having allowed ejected tenants from other properties to squat on his estate at nominal rents, there are, of course, some wretched cabins. But I found the contrast great between his villages and the wretched places I passed through yesterday, in my road to Tralee, miserable beyond the power of description.

“I asked O’Connell fully his views about the distress. He is opposed to a private subscription, at present, at least, as taking the responsibility from Government. His great fear is, not the want of employment—that, he thinks, the public works will provide—but actual scarcity of food, insufficiency of Indian meal; and he thinks Government ought to pay in meal, in order to secure a supply at wholesale prices. This was the conclusion I had previously come to; without it, 8*d.* or 10*d.* a day will not keep large families alive, and the families here are something fearful. The farmers frequently marry their daughters at twelve or thirteen, for fear of accidents, and the peasants marry nearly as soon. Girls are mothers generally at sixteen. Charles O’Connell told me of a tenant of his who had two children, not twins, before she was sixteen. On the other hand, the standard of chastity is far higher than with us, and illegitimate children rare. I am now at Limerick, having come up the Channel by steamer from Tarbert. I go to Galway to-morrow, but if the weather—which has turned very cold and stormy—does not improve, I shall give up, jaunt to Connemara, and return straight from thence to Dublin.

“I am more than ever convinced that Friends ought to take up the state of this people, as a society, and strive to bring their weight, which in such a case as this would be great, to bear upon the Government.

“Your very affectionate son,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

“Galway, September 28th, 1846.]

“MY DEAR FATHER,

“I have reached here this morning, to this most foreign-looking, but for Ireland not very poor, town; and heartily glad I am for your letter. From Limerick here, I came through a better and more improved country, bearing the trace of painstaking landlords; some of the land very poor rocky limestone, but I often find the people and condition in inverse proportion to the value of the land. There is a general impression that rents will not be paid this year. One of the largest agents' firms in Dublin told me that they were accepting in great fear bills anticipatory of this year's rents. Very many mortgages will be foreclosed, and properties change hands this year. This will eventually do good, supplanting the needy landlords by capitalists. In fact, this year must be a crisis for Ireland. The whole of this year's income will be mortgaged to Government. I have heard of one barony rated to the Poor Law at £5000, in which presentments have been made for £17,000. The landlords are greatly frightened, as they well may be, but on the whole I think they are trying to do their duty. A great many of the potato grounds are held direct of the landlord. Wages, in the country I passed through to-day appear to be 10*d.*—above the average. In the west of Kerry, I could get any number at 6*d.* to 8*d.* With all this misery, I pass everywhere land which might quickly be reclaimed, to the great profit both of owner and occupier; it is most provoking to see so much money spent on roads with this great want. The grass roads here are far better than our Yorkshire roads.

“As to the temperance pledge, I find many men still keeping it, but the general opinion is, that a large proportion have broke. The priest at Derrynane, Father Welsh (who with one of his companions was a teetotaller, the other priests, bishop included, taking their wine and punch very comfortable-like), told me that he was sorry to say they were sadly losing numbers. Faction fights, I found, were still common about Killarney.

“The price of food is difficult to ascertain. I should not like to change places with the speculators who are making immense profits by the rise in Indian meal.

“The priests like the National Colleges, getting their own way with them. I found them all over the wildest parts of Kerry, the children going every day, and paying one shilling a quarter. The landlords here are really to be felt for; the good suffering for the bad. Captain Kennedy told me that he

had provided for the supplies of his tenantry until the new Act stepped in and took his funds for the whole district. It is an awful crisis, the greatest possible number living on the lowest possible product; and that product now universally failing, starving the people, and ruining the landlords, who will now reap the fruits of their thoughtlessness.

"I find a good large inn here, the landlord very attentive, owing to a recommendation from my friend Burke, whom I met at Derry.

"To-morrow I go on to Westport by Connemara.

"Your very affectionate son,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"I have only met with two tipsy men since I came to Ireland, one a poor beggar, perhaps a fool, instead of drunk, another a small landowner, now getting into a true Galway passion at the next table. I have just learnt that Indian meal has risen in this town, within the last three weeks, from £10 to £14 per ton."

The friends whom he met in Dublin during this first journey of his proved staunch and true, and remained his friends for the rest of his life. There is an amusing letter of his, written during the course of his journey, asking for a remittance of money from one of his new-found acquaintances at Dublin.

"My dear sir," he says, with characteristic bluntness, "in the first place, may I trouble you to lend me £20?" Then he adds, "I find nothing but English in this hotel—sober, calculating fellows (how I hate them!); but the hearing of their ugly voices has recalled me to my calculating powers, and on taking stock, I find that without a fresh supply at Galway, I may as well make up my mind to remain at Connemara."

The £20 was duly sent, and Forster was relieved from his momentary embarrassment. He returned to England at the beginning of October. The impression made upon him in Ireland had been very deep; and he had hardly returned before he set to work to stimulate the movement for the relief of the sufferers from the famine among the English Friends.

"I had hard work enough in London," he writes to one of his Dublin friends, "especially the first day or two. On arriving at Tottenham, I found the clothing scheme thoroughly afloat, my aunts [the Miss Forsters] having sent out five thousand circulars. But nothing would please the women but they must meet me; so I was pitched into a committee of some forty, to tell my own story, and I was so bound to my business that I overlooked all ideas of absurdity, and should

have walked into a company of angels or fiends with equal *sans froid*. But on reflection it does amuse. Only think of poor self swapped down in the midst of forty Quakeresses of all varieties of age, size, and looks; and then baited for a brace of hours by questions on such subjects! A lecture on inexpressibles and unmentionables! And one or two notable old ladies craving for facts, insisting on knowing what the Irish women *did* wear. At last I lost all patience, and broke out with, 'The fact is, they will soon wear nothing. There; take that!' However, the dear creatures did what I asked them, and agreed to make their movement a national one by adding the names of unfriend ladies to their committee, and we find both clothes and funds flowing in from all quarters.

"Well, then I went to the committee of the British Association, and it did my heart good to meet them. Rothschild, Kinnaird, and some dozen other millionaire city princes meeting every day, and working hard. A far greater sacrifice to them than mere gifts of money. Truly the heart of England is touched, and when the 'Saxon hog' does get roused into feeling, he is not such a bad sort of animal after all.

"Next morning my uncle and self saw Lord John, to whom I 'relieved my mind,' as Friends say. What a strange little mortal he is, to be ruler of a mighty nation, with his dwarf-like form, and long, deep, remarkable head, and icy cold expression, with every now and then a look of fire!

"After that our own committee were summoned to meet me; but enough of my egotistical scrawl, which please burn as soon as read."

Deeply as he was interested in Ireland and the famine, he was not induced to remit his interest in affairs at home, and especially in Bradford. The story of his journey to Ireland quickly became known in Yorkshire circles, and his efforts were warmly appreciated.

"Through some accidental circumstances," he says modestly, writing to his friend Barclay Fox, "I am rather popular just now," and he adds that he is in consequence thinking of delivering a lecture or course of lectures to his neighbours in Bradford. "After much cogitation, I have thought of some such matter as this, 'Lessons to be derived from the study of the History of the English People; an attempt at comparison between past and present condition of our poor, and deductions therefrom of hints for their future help.' Tell me what thou thinkest of that, and also of any books which would assist me in the history of the poor. The state of Ireland is now an awful warning against neglect of the duties of property."

Meanwhile, the efforts which he and others were making for the purpose of arousing public feeling in England regarding the condition of Ireland bore fruit. His father's journey to the distressed districts, of which a deeply interesting account remains on record, began, as has been said, in November; and in January, William Edward Forster himself returned to Ireland for the purpose of joining his father, and assisting him in his work. He kept a rough diary of his journey.

"1847, *Jan. 15th.*—Breakfasted with Uncle Josiah at Tottenham, called on Kingscote, read him my father's extract about clothing; heard from him that Government were helping their subscription. . . . Called then at Wesleyan Mission House, saw Hoole; Beecham and Bunting not in; talked and read to him about clothing, which he took up. A circular for funds to their societies under their consideration, only difference of opinion between giving to national fund and to their own superintendents; probably the last will be passed. He will take into consideration a circular to women about clothing, about which I am to write him. Saw James Forster in omnibus, who seemed warmed by Baptist Noel's sermon, which made his congregation cry, and dragged £1800 out of their pockets; tried to find Baptist Noel about clothing, but could not, and returned to F. and B.'s country house. Saw J. B., and promised to send him information through my aunts. Took mail to Leeds.

"16th.—Breakfasted at home; few hours at Bradford. Found Irish Committee sitting; spirited—raised £2000 already; probably will give it to Friends. Got to Liverpool in time for steamer.

"17th.—Befogged. Got to Keriten about eleven; breakfasted at Dixon's. Went to Dublin, called at Relief Committee. Dined at Dixon's, young Edward Wakefield there; all full of the meeting of Peers, members, and landholders, in Dublin, held on Thursday, an union of all parties to form an Irish party. Went off by mail, outside.

"18th.—Outside mail till five, when reached Castlebar. Until getting within a stage or so of Castlebar, did not see much greater symptoms of distress or begging than usual. The land, too, in tolerable preparation for next year, from Ballinasloe (dark before) till I got near Castlebar; from there to Westport nothing done. Inquired at Castlebar for my father. Heard a good gentleman had been there, but probably now at Westport. Roads most dangerous; almost impassable from the improvements. Stopped several minutes by carts in a cutting. The labourers and small farmers taken off the land

for these improvements. Read as I came along, attentively, the account of the Thursday meeting in *Nation* and *Freeman's Journal*. Greatest meeting held since volunteer time. Nearly a thousand peers and gentry; all parties represented by their leaders. Many good permanent measures advocated, but the great cry for Government to provide food for the people. O'Connell's speech the best he ever made. The distress in the mouths of every one. Coachman said the very rooks that used to live on the potatoes even falling from hunger.

"Found my father waiting for me at Westport; pretty well, but worn up and worn down. Todhunter and George Alexander with him. . . . Wrote a long letter to uncle [his uncle Josiah Forster], urging on Friends consideration whether they should not memorialize Government to effect of private subscriptions not sufficing, and that they must also feed the people. It is plain no private subscriptions can reach the people. Both extent and details worse than I had expected.

"Glad to get to bed. Up three nights; but not a country now to sleep in.

"19th.—Hard pressure this morning; so much to do before leaving Westport. The town a collection of beggars; the inn beset by a crowd of gaunt creatures, besieging Lynch, the head of the works, for tickets, a man just above the poor one. Owen Toole, from the Isle of Innisturk, stating there are there 128 families, 70 of them without resource, the rest but a trifle. Ordered him a ton of meal, to be distributed by himself, with Court Guard Officer and priest of Clare Island. Last evening my old friend Welsh, of the police, called on my father, with a terrible account of Bandurra. A warm-hearted man, a Dr. Derkee, of Louisburgh, called. The people dying, he says, by 10 and 20 a day, carried off by diarrhœa and dysentery for want of food. He says clothing is greatly wanted, and that in that district it could not be pawned. There was truth and real feeling about him; he was as grateful for £5 from my father and £3 from myself to my old friends as though we had saved him from ruin. My father was there on 7th day and mobbed, ordering a ton for distribution. He is going to Clare Island and will make inquiries for us there. My father had yesterday a long talk with Lord Sligo; likes him; heart in his work; rents reduced, they say, from £25,000 to £5000, but gives £50 for every £100 raised at Westport. One of main movers in late Irish meeting. He gives hope that land here-away will be cultivated. Harbour-master called with bad accounts from Clare Island, also of families dying near by fresh fever for want of food. Left about two in car; father

and myself, to sleep at Ask Lodge, country house of a Plunket, brother of the bishop, son of the late Lord Chancellor, about three miles from Leenane. As I left Westport, saw a crowd of starved almost naked women waiting for soup tickets. Truly famine and pestilence walk the land. Found a most hospitable welcome at Ask, but Plunket at his Delphi Lodge, prevented coming by bad sea. Sent his steward with provisions, who tells a tale of horror of Bandurra, population of 700, no resource but public works and a little live stock, quickly going; meal selling at 3s. 6d. a stone, so a man with a family, earning 8d. per diem at works, may get about a stone of meal for the support of six people for a week. Told with tears in his eyes a story of a poor man selling his new-calved cow, his last resource, to feed his children, with money yet owing from the Board of Works. My father speaks well of the landlords. Not one of the resident landlords he has seen, he says, but works from morning to night for the people; especially well of the clergy; and highly also of the priests. But death from want of food is talked but lightly of by every one; so common, the coroner of Ballinar applied to them for money, not for food, but to enable the people to buy coffins. A wild rough night, but resting quarters. My father's wonder and my own is, not that the people die, but that they live. What have they to live on? Met a poor fellow on the road going to the works, who had had two sheep stolen by his neighbours for food, he having nine children.

"Wrote letter about clothing to Dr. Bunting. Coming to Westport on coach, coachman said when grain was seized men divided fairly. Coracle grain spoilt by laying out under process.

"20th.—Good quarters; Plunkets kind. Got to Leenane about eleven. Large number of men looking better than usual under old Joyce. Working at making quay wall, earning 1s. to 1s. 2d. per diem. People on roadside overwhelmed with joy at sight of loaves. Took boat to Bandurra; terrible misery. Walked up to Plunket at Delphi. . . . Men gaunt skeletons; women in cabins too weak to stand, children crying, women and children almost clotheless; police-sergeant and Plunket's steward begging with tears in their eyes; shell-fish all resource. Obligated to send to boat at Leenane for 30s. worth of meal. Gave it myself; ordered also a ton from Westport; nominal wages on road 8d. to 1s. Patience of people wonderful. . . .

"Got to Clifden—dark. Heard confirmed *four* cases of death from starvation, even within last day or two. Woman

yesterday pulled into a barn in agony of death; found in morning partly eaten by dogs. Another corpse carried up the streets to bury in wheelbarrow till D'Arcy gave money out of his own pocket for coffin.

21st.—After breakfast Dr. Loffield, dispensary surgeon, called on us; spoke of disease and death; said I should find great distress about Kensyle. Went there by car; half-starved horse, police-sergeant, yesterday's acquaintance, taking in man for sheep stealing; overtook men trying for tickets. One case, a man with *three* acres, had had two of potatoes and one of oats. Oats all eaten, potatoes gone. Blake's rent 38s., and 7s. for seaweed. Paid nothing; one cow expected to be seized; five in family; good case. Called on Lees, clergyman; fine fellow, working with all his might. Secretary of committee. Went on to committee; only one man in family employed; court-house like a barn, full of gaunt wretches craving for work; some of the men went to the work in the hope of the lot falling on them. Blake told me no preparation made for next crop. Priest Fitzgerald said twelve cases of death in last ten days; administered last comfort to eighteen within two days. Lees thinks this exaggerated; but knows of seven. Did not ask for assistance; has kept people by private subscriptions; already given £200 or so. Some money on hand; good fellow, but aims too low; his wife—a lady housewife, a noble creature—working like a slave, leaving all things for their kitchen and soup kitchen. Started for Boffin,* hearing of horrible distress; but could not find our boat. Other boat would not go; dark and rough; so engaged it for morning. A poor fellow who carried our bag three miles or more, Lady L. gave *three* quarts of meal to. He seized some of it raw, and said he had had nothing since breakfast yesterday morning. Returned to Lees."

Disjointed and brief as these extracts are, they afford terrible evidence of the state of things with which the Government and its voluntary assistants had to deal in Ireland; whilst the journal also shows the care with which its writer gathered details regarding all the cases brought under his notice. To the last Mr. Forster believed that in order to understand any problem it was essential that the largest possible number of facts bearing upon it should be accumulated. Mere hearsay evidence, however striking, or theory, however plausible, never weighed with him against facts, however trivial those facts might seem to be.

* When Mr. Forster was on his death-bed, he remembered his visit to Boffin, and hearing that Mr. Tuke was there distributing relief, sent a message to him.

On January 26th, Forster returned to England, leaving his father in the midst of his work. He wrote a narrative of his visit for the use of the Society of Friends, in which he told, in the simplest manner, but with all the more force because of its simplicity, the story of what he had seen. There is no need to go further into the details of that terrible time, but some of his reflections upon the famine and its causes are too characteristic to be entirely omitted. Even at that time there were in England not a few who, when they regarded the state of Ireland, were moved only by a feeling of bitter hostility towards the Irish landlords, and Forster felt constrained to raise his protest against such unfairness. "Those English gentlemen," he wrote, "who, turning a deaf ear to the cry of their fellow-countrymen, strive to shift all the responsibility on to the Irish landlords, would do well to study cases such as this, which are, alas! too numerous. However much the past conduct of Irish landlords may have originated or increased the present distress, it is most certain that, as a class, they are unable to keep their peasantry alive. Their blood, therefore, will be at the doors of all of us who, being able, are unwilling to help." Yet, whilst he was thus impelled to protest against a spirit which was not only unjust in itself, but inimical to the interests of the suffering Irish, he was not at all disposed to judge lightly the conduct of those landlords who had in any degree failed in their duty. "I am glad," he writes to his friend James Tuke, "thou wrote so plainly about the Marquis of C—— in the *Daily News*. Such landlords ought to be abolished; they are a nuisance on the face of the earth."

The narrative of his visit to Ireland was the first document of national interest which had gone forth under his own name. It is full of that rugged but impressive eloquence of which, in his after career, he became so complete a master. "When we entered a village, our first question was, 'How many deaths?' '*The hunger has been there,*' was everywhere the cry, and involuntarily we found ourselves regarding this *hunger* as we should an epidemic, looking upon starvation as a disease. In fact, as we went along, our wonder was, not that the people died, but that they lived; and I have no doubt whatever that, in any other country, the mortality would have been far greater; that many lives have been prolonged, perhaps saved, by the long apprenticeship to want in which the Irish peasant has been trained, and by that lovely, touching charity which prompts him to share his scanty meal with his starving neighbour. But the spring of this charity must rapidly be dried up. Like a scourge of locusts *the hunger* daily sweeps

over fresh districts, eating up all before it; one class after another is falling into the same abyss of ruin. There is now but little difference between the small farmer and the squatter. We heard in Galway of little tradesmen secretly begging for soup. The priest cannot get his dues, nor the landlord his rent. The highest and the lowest in the land are forced into sympathy by this all-mastering visitation. The misery of Ireland must increase daily, so far as regards her own resources, for daily they become less. To England must she this year look to save the lives of her children; nor will the need for English aid cease this year. It will be long before, even with her utmost efforts, she can recover from this blow, or will be able to support her own population. She must be a grievous burden on our resources in return for long centuries of neglect and oppression.

“I trust I shall be excused if I express my earnest desire that the members of our society may not consider that their duty to Ireland is fulfilled by their effort to meet this present necessity. Its general and permanent condition is a subject in itself almost too dreadful to contemplate. Famine is there no new cry. It is a periodical disease. Every year there are districts where prevails somewhat of that misery which now rules the land. Over a large portion of its population all the great purposes of existence are forgotten in a struggle with death.

“I would not now discuss the causes of this condition, in order to attempt to apportion blame to its authors; but of this one fact there can be no question, that the result of our social system is that vast numbers of our fellow-countrymen, the peasantry of one of the richest nations the world ever knew, have not leave to live. Surely such a social result as this is not only a national misfortune, but a national sin, crying loudly to every Christian citizen to do his utmost to remove it. No one of us can have a right to enjoy either riches or repose until, to the extent of his ability, he tries to wash himself of all share in the guilt of this fearful inequality, which will be a blot in the history of our country and make her a byword among the nations.”

Such were Forster's words in 1847. No one can read them without feeling that they came straight from the heart; and those who knew him best can bear testimony to the fact that the impression made upon his mind in that time of tragic anguish was never effaced; was, indeed, hardly ever weakened. Three-and-thirty years afterwards he went to Ireland as Chief Secretary, strong in the determination, which he had never

during all that long interval of time relinquished, that he at least would do his best to the utmost extent of his ability to wash himself of all share in the guilt which the condition of that country had cast upon England.

His active exertions on behalf of the Irish by no means ceased when he returned to his business at Bradford. Trade was in a deplorably depressed condition, and there were grave fears of a panic among business men. It was no light sacrifice which the young manufacturer made in giving up so much of his time and his energies to public affairs; but there was work to be done which he felt himself able to do, and which the necessities of his fellow-creatures demanded, and he was still ready to do his best in the good cause.

Writing to Mr. Thomas Cooper, February 28th, 1847, he says:—

“Now I want you to be so very kind as to execute if you can, without real inconvenience, a small commission for me. Did you read Lord Radnor’s protest against the Government measure for Irish relief? It was such a complete exposition of the heartlessness of that school of political economists, that I could not resist writing a reply to it, which I sent, in the form of a letter to his lordship, to Douglas Jerrold, for insertion in his newspaper, with a private note to himself, and requesting him, if he printed it, to send me six copies of the paper. Now, he has not printed it, nor given me any acknowledgment under his ‘notices to correspondents,’ but he has sent the papers, which last fact makes me suppose there is some mistake. Could you, therefore, be kind enough to pay into their office the accompanying stamps, in payment for the newspapers, and ask whether he means to insert it in his paper?”

Jerrold did not insert the letter, and a few days later Forster writes acknowledging that possibly there may have been some reason for his not having done so, as he confesses that he had written in an “angry, unchristian-like spirit; and, though I do take Lord Radnor to be a good imitation of the evil one, yet old Satan and all his imps like their enemies to swear at them.”

To one of the ladies, whose friendship he had made in Dublin, he writes:—

“Rawdon, near Leeds, February 28th, 1847.

“. . . How kind of you to remember not to forget me, and my hankering after that comic love-song, for which and your note my hearty thanks. I wonder who wrote those lines?

It must have been somebody who knew what he or she was writing about; which is what very few scribblers do, either on love or flirtation.

“But this is no time for love songs or flirtations. What horrors you must daily see and hear, for the country around Cork appears to keep up a fearful rivalry with Mayo in death and disease. My father is still in the West; the last report from him is from Sligo. I have this morning received some copies of my report of my last Irish tour, so I venture to send you one; it is, you see, published by our London committee, and dresses me up in a Quaker garb, like a good boy, as I sometimes am.

“I wish I was able to return to Ireland. Were my time my own, I would stay there till next harvest, for, painful as it is to witness the sufferings of this fearful famine, it is still more painful to brood over them at a distance. I do not wonder at your being struck with the awful antiquity of the people you meet—or rather of their ancestors (I am getting worse than Irish in my ‘bulls’). I made the same remark myself in the West. Sometimes I was somewhat amused by this pride of family. Nevertheless, I have great respect, not to say reverence, for real blood. Would that those who have it would now take their right place; that the descendants of the heroes who ruled in Ireland’s fights centuries ago, would step forward and take their place in this fearful conflict with the angel of death who now hovers over their country. This year will try Ireland’s metal, will surely bring out the master minds from amongst her men; ay! and her women too. There is scope enough for the effective exercise of woman’s enthusiasm, which means, being interpreted, Do you, Miss —, fascinate the young gentlemen into philanthropy. Shame all the young men who cluster round you into their duty to their country. You can if you will. . . .

“Mrs. C— is, I think, a friend of O’Connell’s. Poor old man! I fear he is fast going, and it makes me quite low to think of it. I wonder whether the story be true, going the round of the papers, saying that his last words to all his friends as they leave him are, ‘Pray for me, pray for me.’ If true, it is very touching.

“I suppose you know what I fixed with your mother in Dublin? that you are all coming to see me, as soon as the leaves are out, and I intend to ask ‘Festus’ to meet you.

“Believe me, my dear Miss —,

“Your very sincere friend,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

“He was always deeply interested in Ireland,” writes an Irish clergyman who first made his acquaintance at the time of the famine, “never tired of hearing of it, and I had much to tell. I had been touched deeply by the Young Ireland movement. Thomas Davis, its leader, had been my friend, and I had been acquainted more or less intimately with many of its rank and file. I knew John Dillon well, and I have sometimes thought, as I have read with grief the gross and bitter abuse of Mr. Forster by the Parnellites, that if they only knew how tenderly he regarded the whole people, the abuse would cease. I record one little fact. When Smith O’Brien attempted a rising, my friend John Dillon was with him. They were enthusiastic, and had been led to believe, or had persuaded themselves, that Ireland would rise to a man at their call. They called, and no one came; and they themselves were proclaimed as traitors. In talking the matter over and giving expression to my regrets about Dillon, I said, ‘What a position would mine be, if he came to me for shelter! He might think himself quite safe from suspicion of living with an English curate. He knows well enough I should not betray him, but we could not give him room.’ The answer was, ‘Send him to me. He would be quite safe here. No one would suspect a Quaker’”

CHAPTER VII.

1848: AT HOME AND, ABROAD.

DURING the year 1846 Mr. Forster had removed from his lodgings at Bolton to a house at Rawdon, near Apperley Bridge, where he established himself amidst surroundings suited to his growing prosperity in business. His home at Rawdon soon became the centre of attraction, not merely to the more intellectual and public-spirited of his Yorkshire neighbours, but to men and women of national distinction. The visit to Ireland, and the enthusiastic manner in which he had worked in the Irish cause in England, had made his name known in many quarters far removed from those with which he had hitherto been familiar. He had been asked by Lord Russell to give him his impressions of the condition of the Irish people. He had been in constant communication with the editors of the great Liberal newspapers both in London and the provinces; and in London as well as Bradford people were beginning to recognize the fact that his was no ordinary individuality.

Among the many friends who visited him at Rawdon, none were more welcome than Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, who, in the summer of 1847, paid him a three weeks' visit. For Carlyle Forster had the greatest admiration. But whilst he admired the fervour and force of the great writer intensely, he had, if possible, a still keener admiration for, and a truer sympathy with, Mrs. Carlyle. Only those who have heard him speak of that gifted woman, know how deep was the impression which she had made upon him. Once, talking of her, he said, "She was one of those few women to whom a man could talk all day, or listen all day, with equal pleasure."

The visit of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle to Rawdon was therefore one of the brightest spots in his early career in Yorkshire. It was besides an event which, to a certain degree, signalized the fact that he was something more than an ordinary West Riding

manufacturer. His neighbours knew now that he was in close and intimate intercourse with some of the greatest thinkers and writers of his day. Long before this he had made the acquaintance of Lord Houghton, then Mr. Richard Monckton Milnes. Lord Houghton had met him first, soon after his arrival in Bradford, at a local dinner-party, and had been greatly struck by the young man's earnestness and transparent sincerity. He invited Forster to Fryston, and their friendship was cemented during his brief stay there. It was a friendship which was never broken; and it was one which bore fruit afterwards, both in Forster's political and social career.

Now, whilst the Carlyles were his guests, Monckton Milnes came over to Rawdon to join the party, and seldom has one small house in a West Riding valley sheltered four more remarkable persons than were then gathered together. The letters which Forster addressed during this pleasant time to Mrs. Charles Fox, and to his friend Barclay Fox, show how stimulating was the effect of the presence of his distinguished guests alike upon his brain and his spirits. Part of the programme of the Carlyles' sojourn, it should be said, was a trip into Derbyshire.

To MRS. C. FOX.

"Nag's Head, Castleton, Derbyshire,

"August 16th, 1847.

"Past nine in the morning, but no chance of breakfast yet. Carlyle has just informed me from the abysses of his bed he will be ready in half an hour, and Mrs. C., I am told, has been poorly all night, so I will catch a chance of beginning a letter to you. I have been spaing in this distinguished company now for three days. I joined them at Matlock on Friday morning. We took a drive to and picnic that day in Dovedale, came *via* Haddon Hall to Buxton on Saturday, and on here yesterday, performing the Peak Cavern in the afternoon. To-night we hope to arrive at Rawdon, *via* Sheffield.

"I find my company not only informing but most pleasant and easy. Mrs. C. like a girl in her delight at new scenes and situations, and the master uncommonly good-humoured and accommodating, glad to find any one to relieve him of the trouble of travelling, his general tone a good-natured humorous sarcasm, but every now and then a burst of furious indignation or a flash of fiery eloquence.

"His pictorial power is wonderful, I should think unmatched. It is pleasant to see such a mind so completely at

play, and moreover they have both of them so much real heart and genial kindness about them that I believe I shall form a decided friendship with them. It's little notion of a Sunday they have; but last evening I deluded them into a Methody meeting-house, for which I did catch it afterwards. It was a sad failure, a local preacher full of fluent cant, or rather a pair of them praying at one another with all sorts of disgusting contortions. I was sorry to be with him at such a burlesque of prayer. He was furious afterwards, declaring that their belief, if any, was in 'a heaven of lubber-land,' 'a paradise of Burton ale and greasy cakes,' and declared that little more would have roused him to protest, that it would be well 'if they would forthwith cast off this rotten blanket, and step forth in their naked skin'—said rotten blanket being the Methody garment of the religious idea.

"Of course he constantly utters shocks to all one's ideas and principles, sacred and profane; but it is no use arguing with him, as he takes no notice of argument, not even of a contradictory fact, so I wait the exhaustion of his fury, and then, if absolutely needful, content myself with a quiet, simple protest.

"*Rawdon, August 17th.*—I was interrupted yesterday and have been unable to get on with my scrawl till now, when my guests have both departed to bed. Mrs. C. was really ill all yesterday, but revived when she got quietly here, and both of them seem really to enjoy the quiet of this place, declaring that there is more of that 'desideratum' than they have had for many years; but I suppose they will soon find it unbearably dull and take themselves off. We had one rich scene on our journeyings. Determined to see Buxton properly, we drove to a first-class hotel in the Crescent—a stylish, comfortless temple of *ennui*, inhabited by old maids, and worn-out half-pay *roués*, and peaked-up parsons, a species of walking white neck-cloths, altogether a race of men the most opposite to Carlylean that can be conceived. Well, down we went to the *table-d'hôte*, self at the bottom as last comer, C. and his wife on one side of me, and a tall, starched, gentlemanly Irish parson, the ruling *genius loci* on my left. For a time all went on easily in silent feeding or low grumbling, till at last Carlyle began to converse with parson, then to argue with him on Ireland, then to lose thought of all arguments or *table-d'hôte*, and to declaim. How they did stare. All other speech was hushed; some looked aghast, others admiring. Of course they none of them had ever heard or seen any approach to such monster. We remained *incog.* the whole time, spite of all the

schemes of the guests, and the entreaties of the waiter to book our names, and my proposal to Mrs. C. to save our expenses by showing him at so much a head."

To BARCLAY FOX.

"Rawdon, near Leeds, August 27th, 1847.

"MY DEAR BARCLAY,

"Thanks for thy note. It certainly is time for both of us to find something to do beyond merely 'minding our business,' though after all these three last words do really include the whole object of life, if we could but discover what 'our business' really included. I am sorry thou couldst not come to me.

"Carlyle and his wife are still with me, and seem to take to Rawdon kindly; like the quiet, said quiet being both novel and refreshing. He is busy sleeping, and declares himself lazy as a lotos-eater. She certainly is better than when I first found them at Matlock, and a most pleasant companion she is. I have formed quite a friendship with her, and I trust with him too. Catching such a visit is of course quite a trophy in life, but one accidental advantage would amuse you, viz. the salutary discipline of having a man in the house whose way is constantly consulted before my own; partly because he will have it, and partly because I prefer giving it him.

"Monckton Milnes came yesterday and left this morning, a pleasant, companionable little man, well-fed and fattening; with some small remnant of poetry in his eyes and nowhere else, delighting in paradoxes, but good-humoured ones; defending all manner of people and principles in order to provoke Carlyle to abuse them, in which laudable enterprise he must have succeeded to his heart's content, and for a time we had a most [amusing evening, reminding me of a naughty boy rubbing a fierce cat's tail backwards, and getting on between furious growls and fiery sparks, but managing to avoid the threatened scratches. . . .

"Thine ever,

"W. E. FORSTER."

To MRS. C. FOX.

"Rawdon, September 6th, 1847.

"I wish I may get a letter from thee to-morrow, for I am become very anxious to hear. I fear this raw, winter-like weather will suit you ill; and, in short, it is as much as I can do to keep my mind in patience for a letter.

"The Carlyles left me this morning, both for Leeds, then he for Manchester and Scotland, and she for Barnsley, to see some friends of hers. His holiness and I have got on remarkably well these last few days, quite lovingly, and before leaving to-day he actually committed some pretty speeches to the effect that they had 'reason to be thankful for three pleasant peaceful weeks,' 'a sabbath in the mountains,' etc., to which I purred forth a modest complacent return of gratitude for their visit, and so we parted.

"I miss them much. In spite of all, or rather through all, he certainly is a most delightful companion, a rich store of hearty, genial, social kindness shining through his assumed veil of misanthropy, and often all the more conspicuous from his efforts to conceal or disown it, and his eccentric humour striking laughter out of all manner of everyday trivial occurrences. What a fearful, fiend-like creature he would be in his dark moods, when the devil of dyspepsia is upon him, without this merciful safety-valve of humour! Nor, when I got accustomed to it, did I find his will by any means inconvenient. It is not one of those wills which chills or constrains me, capable indeed of strong fierce effort for opposition, but not a constant influence, of which the possessor is less conscious than any of those around him; so, after all, with tact one gets one's own way quite sufficiently with him.

"If Carlyle's companionship has had any mental effect upon me, it has been to give me a greater desire and possibly an increased power to discern the real 'meanings of things,' to go straight to the truth wherever its hiding-place, and sometimes his words, not so much by their purport as by their tone and spirit, sounded through me like the blast of a trumpet, stirring up all my powers to the battle of life.

"Another effect has been to make me desire to sift my faith, not, I trust, in a frivolous sceptical temper, but in order to get yet firmer foothold, to strengthen my convictions, so that I may in future be able to meet him or his likes, not with a mere logical opinion, but with a living faith which might prove its own power. Our belief, indeed, if we do not, as Coleridge said, merely 'believe that we believe,' ought to be wound round our very heart-strings, and always present in our thoughts and evident in all our words and deeds; but to attain such a faith as this I suppose both earnest humble prayer and hard struggling thought are needed. It is, indeed, sad to see so much of the high intellect of this age at issue with Christianity. I cannot but believe that this jar, this war of truths, is not altogether owing to the rebellious wilfulness

of human reason, but partly to the peculiar character of our age, which is, I suppose, really to use the slang term of the philosophers, 'an age of transition,' but it does seem as though the old clothing of Christianity was worn out, as though a new expression, a fresh texture (?) of the Christian idea was needed to suit the increased stature of the human mind. Men grumble at Romanism and Church of Englandism and Protestant Dissenterism, and cannot be convinced that all these are mere frozen formulas of Christianity, which after all is no 'ism' at all. Quakerism is doubtless the liveliest of the 'isms,' but still it wants universality, and somehow is hardly, to use one of Carlyle's best expressions, altogether 'conformable with the everlasting laws of God written on our nature.'

"But I am scrawling on, I fear, sad trash about 'isms,' and formulas, and undressed ideas, and an age of transition, which irresistibly reminds me of Master Oldenbach's mode of 'turning over a new leaf' by changing his shirt after each crisis in his pursuit of the 'beloved object.'

"Mrs. C. has taken off a wild, furious, spitfire of a kitten, out of which she has been sedulously and most vainly trying to 'love the devil,' *à la* Emerson. She begged me for a name, and so I have suggested 'Quack,' as short for Quaker and emblematic of the giver."

The visit of the Carlyles, delightful as it was, did not, however, pass over without an incident, which might have been attended by very serious consequences. This was an accident which happened to Forster and Mrs. Carlyle, whilst they were driving from Bradford to his house at Rawdon. The horse ran away, and both were thrown out of the gig, he sustaining a severe sprain of the ankle. Writing to his mother, shortly after the occurrence, he says, "Jane Carlyle was with me, and she behaved with wonderful presence of mind; turned her back to the horse, and embraced the gig, and so just rolled out, and was not hurt. As I had nothing but the reins to hold by, and was nearly standing upright, in order to have more purchase to pull, I was of course shot out some way. I had bought the mare a few days before—warranted quiet in harness—and so she seemed, both when I rode and drove her, till this time. But, owing I suppose to my better keep, she pulled desperately that day, and all down that long hill from Bradford I had hard work to keep her in; forced to wind the reins round both hands, and stand up to pull. However, I had managed to hold her till coming down hill, when I thought the worst was over. She galloped off, in

consequence of Carlyle's overtaking us riding. I should have stopped her, but part of the kicking-strap gave way, so she managed to get one leg over the shaft, and as both the shafts broke, of course the gig fell forward, and we out."

This, if popular tradition is to be believed, was not by any means Mr. Forster's first misadventure when driving. Some of the old inhabitants of Bradford still remember the strange figure he cut when he drove into the town, on his way to business, perched on the top of a very high gig, and driving an unusually big horse, with reins that were generally loose, and at a pace which might almost have been expected to call for the interference of the authorities.

Writing to his wife (March 31st, 1863), he tells an amusing story which refers to this period of his career: "Fison has got a story of my bachelor days which will amuse thee. Do you remember J. D——, of Yeadon, that old, fat, round-faced Methody wool-stapler? Well, it appears, in the days of the old mare, I was driving home from Bradford, and took him up at Eccleshill Moor. The pace down the hill astonished him to the extent of shutting his eyes and hunching himself up on the seat with hands clenched in mortal fear; and glad he was to get home. Soon after his son came in looking very glum. 'What's t' matter with thee, lad?' 'What's t' matter with thee, feyther? Why could na' thou see me a bit sin'? Thou might have taken notice of thy son, though thou was in Mr. Forster's gig.' 'Eh, bless thee, lad; I had more to do than to take notice of thee. I was ower throng (busy) making my peace with my Maker.'"

The year 1848 was in many respects memorable in the life of Forster, as well as in the history of Europe. It was the year in which, for the first time, he may be said to have taken his own line in politics. Up to this time, though he had thought much and read widely, and though his distinctive characteristics had never been concealed from his friends, it had not fallen to his lot to figure before the general public, either in Bradford or elsewhere, as a man of exceptional ideas or characteristics. To think deeply and weigh carefully, taking all sides of a question into his consideration, to decide deliberately, and then to speak strongly, had, even in his youth, been Forster's method; but, hitherto, it was only in the circle of his own friends, or whilst employed in work so entirely congenial as that in which he was engaged in Ireland, that this method had been used. To Forster had now come, as there comes to most human beings, the moment in which he had to choose between the easy and pleasant course, which

has for its reward the applause of one's friends and neighbours, and the hard and painful road, strewn with flints, on which a man is followed by the maledictions, rather than the blessings, even of those whom he most loves and reveres.

Mr. Forster, as his correspondence with Thomas Cooper proves, had long been in favour of the widest extension of the franchise, and already his advanced opinions upon this subject had been noted with something like dismay by his more timid and Conservative friends. But, up to this point, nothing had happened to bring his pronounced Radicalism into prominence in the public life of Bradford,* and the more cautious of the Liberal politicians of the place were in good hopes that, when the time for deciding came, Forster would recoil from doctrines which they themselves regarded with abhorrence, and which, at that epoch of our history, were almost as unfashionable as any that a man could hold. Those who made this calculation had little knowledge of Forster's force of character, or of the tenacity with which he clung to those opinions which he had deliberately formed. No man was ever less prone to make up his mind hastily; no man was ever more anxious to learn everything that could be said, upon all sides of a question, before coming to a decision; but, when once the decision had been formed, there was no one so stubborn and determined in adhering to it as he was.

Up to the beginning of 1848 the belief in a large extension of the franchise—in manhood suffrage, in fact—had been merely a “pious opinion” on the part of men in Forster's position in life; but with 1848 came a social and political upheaval, the like of which has not since been seen in Europe. Many countries of the Continent have indeed passed through still sharper crises since then; but England at all events has happily known nothing within the memory of this generation which will compare with 1848. The condition of the working classes was very serious. Trade was bad; food was dear; and political discontent of a pronounced character was rampant. Social heresies had obtained a strong hold upon many of the more intelligent and better educated of the artisans. There was a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the methods by which the government of the country was carried on, and those who did not realize the intense conservatism of the English nature, or the impregnable strength of English institutions, believed that this country, like France,

* Shortly before this he had strongly supported the proposed candidature of Lord Ashley for Bradford; the ground of his action being his strong approval of the Ten Hours' Bill, which was at that time opposed by many leading Radicals.

was on the verge of a great social and political revolution. The Chartist movement had secured the adherence of an enormous multitude of working men. Looking back from a period at which most of the points of the charter have been embodied in Acts of Parliament, the movement itself seems to have been singularly pacific, and even laudable in its character; but in 1848 the classes viewed it very differently. In the opinion of society it was nothing less than an attempt to overthrow those institutions under which England had become free and great, and any one who supported that movement ran no small danger of falling under a social ban.

Bradford, in its economic condition, was no exception to the majority of English towns. The working classes were suffering; and political agitation and discontent followed hard upon the heels of this suffering. Forster's intense sympathy with the working men was conspicuous now. He had not yet formed any clear opinion as to the means by which the existing discontent and the poverty and privations of the people could be remedied. His inclination was, however, towards the doctrine that the State is bound to see to the welfare of its children, and he was strongly tempted by the notion of national workshops, in which the honest labourer might always find sufficient work for his hands, and an adequate recompense for his toil.

Mention has been made of the persons of intellectual distinction whom he welcomed to his house at Rawdon; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that, either then or at any subsequent period of his career, it was these alone whose society he sought. There are still living, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, not a few working men, who have never risen above the rank to which they were born, who can give testimony to the contrary. It was Forster's delight to gather round him in his home working men who showed that they were inspired by an earnest desire to aid in the solution of the great social and political problems of the time; and many an evening did he spend in quiet discussion with such men. They, on their part, learned to regard the young manufacturer with strong affection and trust. It has already been told how the working classes of Bradford were looking to him as their destined leader. Individual working men in the town and the district surrounding it regarded him as something more; they believed that he was destined to play a great part on the stage of public affairs, and they saw in him a man who was hereafter to rescue their common country from the ignorance and the poverty from which its people suffered.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in that stormy spring of 1848, Forster was found sympathizing strongly with the objects for which the Chartists were striving. He was one in heart with them, so far as their principal aims were concerned. At a meeting which the mayor of Bradford had summoned, for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of the charter, he gave a distinct statement of his opinions with regard to the various points of that celebrated document. He went as far, he said, in favour of universal suffrage as any one present, and he was entirely with them with regard to the abolition of the property qualifications for members of Parliament. As to the ballot, however, he hated secrecy, and thought that if they obtained universal suffrage they would not want protection of that kind. He was not prepared to vote in favour of annual parliaments, nor did he regard the payment of members as advisable, whilst the question of electoral districts was one which he had not yet considered. It will be seen that upon the main point for which the Chartists were contending, Mr. Forster was entirely with them.

There was, however, one subject upon which he differed, and differed resolutely from most of their number. The idea of obtaining redress by physical force—in other words, of resorting to revolutionary violence for the purpose of securing their ends—had fascinated large bodies of the working classes, and was openly advocated by some of the more prominent of their leaders. It was an idea, however, which Forster not only never adopted, but which he most strenuously opposed. To secure the reform of bad laws by moral pressure, and not by the erection of barricades, still less by a resort to the weapons of the assassin, was the policy which he advocated. It cost him, at the time, not a little of his popularity with the masses; but this was a fact which could not weigh with him against an imperative duty; and both in season and out of season he was urgent in striving to impress upon the reformers the necessity of abstaining even from the remotest threat of violence for the purpose of advancing their cause. Yet, though he stood firm on the side of law and order, it was not in his nature to content himself merely by pointing out to the physical force party the folly and the wickedness of the course which they advocated. He sought to win them to his side by proving to them that they had the sympathy and support of many who were in a different social position, and that it was through the disinterested assistance upon which they might thus rely that their ultimate victory could alone be achieved.

It was enough, however, for the bigoted opponents of all reform, and for the timid souls who could not understand the passionate desire of the Chartists to secure that which everybody now admits to be their fair share in the government of the country, to know that he sympathized with the objects at which the reforming party aimed, in order to ensure his condemnation in their minds as one who was even worse than the most dangerous of the agitators.

For the purpose of diverting the Chartists of Bradford from the thought of resorting to violence, and in order to convince them that they had friends in their social superiors, he drew up a paper expressing sympathy with the just demands of the working classes for political reform. He eagerly canvassed for signatures to this document among the manufacturers and other influential residents in the borough. Writing to his mother, April 4th, 1848, he says:—

“More than five hundred electors, or more than a quarter of the constituency, have signed the paper, and I do honestly believe it has done real good with the mob.” Then he adds significantly, “If any of my real friends are hurt with the part I have lately taken, I am very sorry for it; but I cannot help it, as I did it for the best, and was very anxious to do the right thing, and to the best of my ability did it. I do not think that either thou or Gussy [his mother’s old pony] need have any fear of an outbreak. The only districts where such is possible are in places like Bradford, where there are immense masses of hungry men, who are tired of periodical attacks of famine, and inclined to try their own powers of government, seeing all others have failed. Unless some political concessions be made to these masses, and unless all classes strive earnestly to keep them better fed, first or last there will be a convulsion; but I believe the best political method of preventing it is by the middle class sympathizing with the operatives, and giving themselves power to oppose their unjust claims by helping them in those which are reasonable.” This, it need hardly be said, was not the view which commended itself at that time to many of his eminently respectable friends, and he was made to feel that, when a man takes an unpopular course at a moment of political and social excitement, he must be prepared to abide the consequences. Writing in his diary he says:—

“April 16, 1848 (*Sunday*).—I am suffering persecution for radicalism’s sake. If it were for anything I really cared about, persecution would be quite a pleasant variety, but as it is, it is a provoking nuisance. Last Monday was the presenta-

tion of the Chartist petition (which petition, by-the-by, turns out a lying humbug, as to both quantity and quality of signatures). The delegates of the National Convention talked pikes and armed processions and all manner of horrors, and great was the fear thereat, and the swearing of respectabilities in as constables, and at these wretched Chartists. The *Times* and the Government and all cockneys were so much alarmed, that we took fright in Bradford also, and swore in some one thousand five hundred defenders of the peace, myself among others, and summoned the yeomanry, and even yet have our ears alive to rumours of pikes and lead stolen for bullets, etc. Many of our Liberals, thinking that the best mode of quieting the mob was by evidence of sympathy on the part of the middle classes, and an attempt at least at their guidance, we called a meeting of the more active members of Colonel Thompson's committee, at which I was chairman, and at which, after much palaver, we decided on the electors addressing a manifesto to the non-electors, Godwin and self being appointed to draw it up. So we concocted somewhat of a washy performance, promising to aid them in their efforts for the suffrage, if peaceable, but loudly preaching order and abusing violence. This was signed by most of our big guns, T. Salt, Forbes, James Ellis, John Priestman, and between five hundred and six hundred electors—more than a quarter of the whole constituency—and was, I believe, a real anodyne to the mob, but a sad stumblingblock and rock of offence to all Conservatives. Accordingly, Friday morning, upon my entering ——'s bank to advise a bill—happily with more than would cover the advice—to my surprise, —— hurled at me a shower of abuse across the counter, in presence of his nephew and the clerks, and informed me my conduct was a discredit to my family and myself. In regard to myself that was a matter of little consequence; but for my family he was pleased to express his sorrow, and wound up a harangue—in the course of which I am thankful to say I kept my temper, though he lost his—by the practical announcement that, having no longer any confidence either in me or any of the signers of the horrible placard, he for his part was not inclined to trust his money to such rebels. Whereupon I thanked him for the information and marched off, writing, when I reached the warehouse, a note to the firm, requesting to know if the firm adopted ——'s opinion, and if so, what were their business intentions. To this note I expect an answer tomorrow. Meantime, I am very anxious lest I should be driven by such threats, which, abstractedly speaking, deserve

nothing but contempt, to take stronger or more decisive political steps than my conscience will approve. I am determined to tell no lies, either to the mob or to myself, if I can help it; and so I am looking hard at this condition of the masses question, and have been employing this Sabbath in reading Louis Blanc's 'Organisation de Travail,' re-reading Carlyle's 'Chartism the Peril of the Nation,' Thornton's 'Over Population,' etc. This book of Louis Blanc's is the exposition of his social workshops, whereby he expects to remodel society and banish misery, and which he is now trying on a large scale in Paris, to utter failure, say the papers. But so short a trial, in such a turbulent time, can hardly, I think, prove the failure."

How little Forster was deterred from taking that which he believed to be the right course, even by the threats of his banker, was shown a few days later. A meeting of Chartists was held in Bradford which was popularly described as a meeting of rebels. Forster himself attended it, and "roared from the top of a waggon to six or eight thousand people for nearly three quarters of an hour, and pushed a strong moral force resolution down their throats, at the cost of much physical force exertion" on his own part. "I relieved my mind to the people, and pitched into the National Convention, and in short preached a sermon, which they took better than might have been expected."

With regard to this meeting he wrote to his father as follows:—

"I am grieved that my friends in London are put out with that public meeting. I certainly did believe, and do still believe, that I should have done wrong in not going there, for, as I had influence with the people, I was bound to exercise it. We look forward with some anxiety to the possibility of a disturbance spreading here from other places in the course of next week. It will not begin here, but if it be prevented here, it will be because the working classes believe the middle classes sympathize with them. The feeling in favour of universal suffrage is a very different thing here from what it is with you or in London. It is a resolute, long-held determination by the large body of the operatives, and they will not rest till they get some great concession; and, considering the very large proportion they bear here toward other classes, they demand great tact in management."

It was whilst his mind was thus fully occupied by the exciting political affairs of which both England and the Continent were the scene, that he received an invitation to visit

Paris, in company with some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Paulet, for the purpose of seeing, on the spot, the fruits of the revolution. He left Bradford on Friday, April 28th, spending part of the next day with the Carlyles, in London, and started on Sunday for Paris. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Paulet and Miss Jewsbury. The story of his visit, as told by himself in his diary, still possesses a certain amount of political interest, in addition to that which attaches to it in connection with Mr. Forster himself. They reached Paris on Monday, May 1st.

"May 26th.—Since my last entry, I have had a fortnight of deep interest and excitement in France. I started Friday, April 28th; slept at London; took tea with the Carlyles on Saturday, and off we went on Sunday; our 'we' being Mr. and Mrs. Paulet, Miss Jewsbury, and self—Emerson not being ready to join us. We went *via* Folkestone; beautiful passage; sleeping Sunday night at Boulogne. Next morning, Tuesday, May 2nd, we chiefly shopped—the ladies seeking bonnets, and I gazing about like a gormous Essex calf, all my intellect absorbed in a fixed idea of indignant aversion to the men who built the tower of Babel, making my tongue of so little avail. Nevertheless, I did get on beyond my expectation—more, however, by dint of roar and gesture than words, as Miss Jewsbury said, 'as if I talked with my fists.' We went into that magnificent church of the Madeleine: Mass as usual performing, with all manner of gorgeous mummery, under that mighty pictorial lie of Napoleon kneeling before Christ, making the *amende honorable* to religion. A few minutes after leaving the church, we chanced on a crowd, under the Hôtel des Affaires Étrangères, round a tall, gaunt-looking man, bloused, with large horn spectacles stuck at the end of his long nose, chanting forth in most quizzical fashion a set of political parodies, in prose and verse—the Lord's Prayer, the creed, the confession of sins, etc., applied to Louis Philippe and Guizot. Here were the two extremes—the hypocritical lie, and its blasphemous inversion—close together. There are troops of caricatures on the walls of Paris, chiefly Louis Philippe and Guizot; little real wit or humour. In order to be witty, it seems as though Frenchmen must be either blasphemous or dirty; but their want of the humorous is a real misfortune. We should laugh down much of the mischief of their revolution, and though ridicule does harm exceptionally and partially, in the main and long run it is sure to do good. It blows up many bubbles, and can destroy nothing that has real life. I observed there were no caricatures of the Provisional Government, or any powers that be, with the exception of a few skits at *les femmes libérées*—all

kicks at the fallen lion. We dined at the *table-d'hôte* for the first and last time, sticking afterwards to the restaurateurs. In the evening we, that is the two ladies and self—for the others could not get in, the throng was so great—went to see Rachel act *Phœdre*, and hear her sing the Marseillaise. The acting seemed to me better than English, more natural; but the Marseillaise was memorable. Brandishing the tricolour and thrilling that large theatre with her rich tones of defiance, she was, as it were, an incarnation not of liberty, but of license. She was much cheered, and the theatre was crowded, I suppose on her account.

“*May 3rd.*—We went to the Luxembourg. We could not get in to the Chamber of Peers, where sat Louis Blanc’s commission of labour; but wandered through those grand galleries and magnificent gardens; blouses, several of them boys (the *garde mobile*), standing sentry in the corridors and marching through the gardens. We also went to Louis Blanc’s tailor workshop. Some one thousand five hundred tailors in the old debtor prison of Clichy, working away, or professing to do so, singing the Marseillaise; all—good workers and bad—earning two francs a day; a species of organization which will produce but little labour, be a premium upon idlers, and quickly disgust the good workmen, as I heard before I left it had done.

“Much struck at the Hôtel de Ville by the respect paid by the mob to the furniture. It had been one of the chief scenes of the revolution, and tens of thousands, they said, had poured through; but the splendid curtains and mirrors were unhurt, even the carpet looked hardly the worse for wear, and no fracture, but one head of Louis Philippe, which had had a bullet passed through it. In one room there was a congregation of flags—presents to the republic—among others, the green flag of Erin, from Smith O’Brien and Co. In a corner of the room was the address of the English Chartists; framed. The large space in front of the Hôtel de Ville seemed the great rendezvous for the street politicians. There were several groups of earnest talkers, chiefly blouses. In one we heard an old stern man quoting Danton; in another a man was haranguing furiously against all money scrapers and aristocrats. Same evening the Bey introduced us to a club of the National Guard, or the Moderates—I suppose all guard men, and so *bourgeois*—held in a large riding-school. There were present full a thousand in the body of the club, and several in the galleries. Many ladies. We thought it would be a tame affair, but it turned out violent enough. The main subject was denunciation of Blanqui, Barbes, and the Exaltés, who had put

out a violent proclamation that day, and were thought to be projecting an *émeute*. They were especially fierce against Barbes, because he was one of their own colonels. It was a strange scene, vividly recalling the reports of the Jacobins and Cordeliers, with the tribune, the president with his bell, the fierce eagerness of the speakers, rushing from all sides to the tribune, far too earnest to make long speeches. It was plain they felt the subject a question, if not of life, of the means of living: and, in truth, all Paris is now absorbed in this contest between the *bourgeoisie*, the property men and friends of peace and order, with the *ouvriers*, or rather, with the demagogues, communists, and other ultras, who strive to excite them.

"*May 4th.*—A glorious cloudless day for the christening of the republic. We ensconced ourselves, about eleven, in chairs in the garden of the Tuileries facing the Chamber of Deputies, hoping to see the Provisional Government proceed to the opening of the assembly. There certainly were immense masses of people. The Place de la Concorde almost filled with National Guards and spectators, and the Champs Elysées and gardens of the Tuileries swarming with crowds. I swarmed up one of the statues by the obelisk, amid the acclamations of the surrounding populace—sitting on some good lady's lap, name unknown—Victory, probably—and there fraternized between two blouses, to my great comfort, till driven down by the guards, who would not allow the statue to be desecrated. It was vain to attempt to discern the members of the Government as they walked up, and it was so long before the assembly came to the actual christening—the proclaiming of the republic—that all the party, barring Mrs. Paulet and self, were tired and hungered off. We waited on, and at length took refuge in a wretched café, a house of call for guardsmen, in the inner room whereof we were discussing some champagne, and a most mysterious preparation of cold meat, when we heard firing of cannon, and a mighty scuttering among the guards. So out we rushed, and charged all through the Place de la Concorde, up to the Chamber of Deputies, the gallant guardsmen making way for a lady. We caught a glimpse of the deputies, in their white waistcoats, announcing the republic, but could not desery faces. There were considerable cries of 'Vive la République!' but not what an Englishman would have called a good shout. But then the French do not understand hurraing. The clashing of the bayonets, and the hoisting of the caps on their points were the most picturesque portions of the manifestation.

"*June 3rd.*—Divers distractions. Chartist row and other

confusions have so beset me this past week, that I have been unable to journalize, and must now content myself with a brief notation, sufficient to recall facts and sights hereafter to my memory.

"*May 5th (Friday).*—Breakfasted with Monckton Milnes, whom I found at Meurice's, fraternizing with everybody, and by his advice went to Blanqui's Club. Mrs. P. and I bought the tickets at the office, near the Faubourg St. Antoine, up three pairs of stairs; a pair of dark gloomy rooms, filled with most suspicious-looking blouses, more like animals than men, with their fierce eyes and long Marat-like jaws, and naked hairy breasts—Blanqui's bodyguard, in short. Very civil, however, they were to us, quite polite; and in the evening at the club, one of them, remembering Mrs. P., put us in before our turn, to the great disgust of the rest of the queue. The club was held in a small handsome theatre, the members in the pit, and the audience, many of them well-dressed ladies, in the galleries. The debate not exciting, but discussions of abstract questions of government, absolute will of the people, and the like constitution-mongering. Blanqui himself, a small thin man, with close-cut hair, piercing fox-like eyes, which never looked his audience in the face, shrewd deep forehead, insinuating untrue smile, altogether a calculating, conspiring, bad face, but a very determined expression. There was no eloquence whatever in his dull dry dogmatism, which reminded me of Robespierre; and he seemed to rule solely by persevering strength of will and persistence of purpose. A slight, well-formed, pleasing-looking boy, his blouse quite tastily girt with the Montaguard sash, was the most characteristic speaker. The mingled confidence and courtesy with which he defended the absolute government of reason against that of caprice was amusing enough. Probably most of these members were secretly armed. The club was known to have dépôts.

"*May 7th (Sunday).*—In the morning just walked in to the fine old church of St. Roch, to look at Mass. I like the side chapels in these large churches, where people can and do commune with themselves, Quaker fashion, making use of the saint, I suppose, as a species of peg whereon to hang their meditations. Certainly there is hardly a symptom of the Sabbath in Paris—shops beginning to shut in the afternoon, when Mass is ending. In the afternoon to Versailles. Mob having pulled the railway bridge down, had to cross the Seine by a raft bridge—a most inconvenient practical result of the revolution. Too late to go into the palace, but saw the fountains play. Very magnificent; crowds of people, looking

merry and happy, and the palace blooming enough, as if it had no objection to swear allegiance to the sovereign people. Picked up an informing acquaintance, Ward, an ally of Milnes', a correspondent of the *Weekly Chronicle*, and especially up in the Communists.

"*May 8th (Monday)*.—Sadly victimized in the morning. Rushed off at five to Nôtre Dame to hear grand Mass, and the Holy Spirit invoked to bless the republic. Found it was not to be *first* Mass, but *second*, so we had to parade the streets, take refuge in a bathroom, and look and feel pictures of misery till we could get some coffee in a wine-shop, and then take ourselves back. Emerson turned up at breakfast, and then Mrs. P. and I sallied off to Mass again, Miss J. having exhausted her religion. The Mass was certainly magnificent, the archbishop giving the sacrament himself. A fine-looking priest, Père Lacordaire, the popular friar, in his Benedictine robes and with his earnest ascetic-looking face, preached; but we did not stay the sermon. The Provisional Government did not turn up to be blessed, but there were some few deputies, and amongst them the man whom, next to Lamartine, I most wished to see in France—de la Rochejaquelin—a sensible, good-natured English-looking face, with an air of resigned courage, which was quite touching. Evening to some theatre, to hear Frederick Lemaître, a comic notoriety, in *Robert le Diable*; but I could not sit it out, nor take pleasure in representations of dramatic scoundrels when the whole city was the scene of such a stirring drama. We went out in search of Barbes' Club, but found that it did not meet on Mondays.

"*May 9th (Tuesday)*.—The Bey, ladies, and self to St. Denis, the tombs of the old kings and queens, Clovis and Clotilde, Francis, Charles, Louises, without number, and all these gorgeous arabesques, all these sepulchres of the past, strangely contrasting with the stirring realities of the present. Dined in a homely, comfortable restaurant at St. Denis. Emerson, and Mrs. P., and I, again went in search of Barbes' Club, but found it put off till next day, so went to the first sitting of a free trade club, got up against the Communists. Very respectable, but scanty and tame, altogether a flat affair.

"*May 10th (Wednesday)*.—This evening we at last accomplished Barbes' Club, and a most stormy affair it was, even disturbing Emerson's equanimity. A large, low concert room, bad to hear in from its lowness and number of pillars. We were in a side box, but the pit was crammed full, and in fact all the room. They were a fierce, wild-looking set, but mostly well dressed. Few blouses, chiefly, I suppose, students, *hommes*

de lettres, and artists, moustachiod and bearded in all possible varieties. Barbes himself, a tall, handsome, soldier-like man, with resolute lips and commanding air. I was much struck with the audience's intense rage at any, even friendly, interruption, as though they feared their own excitability.

"*May 11th (Thursday)*.—Emerson, who as yet abided in our hotel, brought to breakfast with us Doherty, an Irishman, whose socialism had made England, where he had headed the phalanx, too hot for him. Milnes met him, so we got deep into Communism, Fourrièrism, etc. The man was dogmatic, as all these reformers are; but not exactly a fool. Lately, thinking France had just now her hand in for that sort of job, he had proposed that the State should buy up all the land and redistribute it, according to socialist principles. From him I learn that the great distinction between communism and socialism is that the latter believes in payment according to work done, and the former does not. So Louis Blanc, with his day's work, is of the communist school. In the evening to the Club des Femmes, the first, and I should think the last séance. A most desperate crushing crowd. Barbes' club room. Two guardsmen with bayonets fixed at the door, to prevent the men rushing in without payment; but when we got a few steps off, there was a cry raised of 'à bas les fusils,' some clattering of bayonets, much shrieking of women, a desperate struggle for a minute, ending in the guns being wrenched out of the guards' hands, one of them pitched away behind the gate, and the other downstairs, and we finding ourselves instantaneously in the club, of course without payment. There were some fifty to a hundred well-dressed women, none old, and some quite young and good looking, and an immense crowd of men. Madame —, the president, made a long, tolerably fluent address, chiefly on organization of women's labour, but much interrupted, partly because it was hard to hear, and partly because there was plainly a crowd of rascals bent on mischief. The Abbé Chatel, a Catholic of the Abbé Lamennais School, who had made a most eloquent speech the night before, tried with his majestic air and most sonorous voice to restore order, but in vain; and the man who followed smashed all up by the unlucky expression, 'Messieurs, les dames sont libérées à votre discretion,' at which there were roars of laughter, amid which, and the breaking of lamps, and cries of 'à la porte les interrompeurs,' the séance broke up.

"This evening gave me some notion of the superficiality of French gallantry. It breaks down forthwith before excitement, being chiefly grounded on sexual feeling, whereas

English consideration for women, arising more from a wish to protect the weak, is far more permanent and dependable, though less apparent. Few English mobs, none, I think, of education, would have behaved as these fellows did, to the great disgust of some of the audience. 'Ah! les bêtes;' said some women in our box, and one man mourned over 'pauvre France,' 'pauvre nation,' quite disconsolate.

"May 12th (*Friday*).—This morning made a desperate attempt to get into the National Assembly, which is almost as difficult as to get elected, as no influentialy likes to give tickets over the mob, and the mob stand guard all night. However, one of those harpy commissioners, C——, of the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion, to whom Lythall introduced me, said he would buy a blouse to keep my place. But this failed. The other blouses informed, blew up our scheme, and after some struggling, much scolding, and fraternizing in wine-shops with riff-raff over cognac and sour wine, I was obliged to retire discomfited, C——, the scoundrel, getting drunk. In the evening, went with Milnes to the Club des Ateliers (workmen opposed to Louis Blanc), held at l'École de Medecin. No women, but many members. Debate whether pleasure or duty the end of man. As earnest about it as though it were an individual question of bread and butter. All Frenchmen are fluent, never break down, partly I suppose from natural quickness, and partly from recklessness, whether their words have an idea or not. At the clubs, if they fear sticking, they wind up with some one of the everlasting variations of 'liberté, égalité, fraternité.' After the club had decided for duty, by a show of hands, we left; much struck by the picturesque beauty of the old narrow streets, with their tall gable roofs, in the bright moonlight. . . .

"May 14th (*Sunday*).—In the evening, with Emerson, to Blanqui's Club; an extra, and its last settling with him. He was long in earnest confab with some of his *intimes*, arranging, I suppose, his plan for to-morrow. But after just settling that there was to be a manifestation for Poland next morning, they set to work discussing abstract questions as usual. There were many spectators, but few members.

"May 15th (*Monday*).—As we intended leaving this evening, packed up early, then waited the Polish procession, which was to pass along our boulevards about half-past eleven. A few hundred marched by crying, 'Vive la Pologne!' probably the advanced guards. But thinking they were all, Mrs. P. and I took a cab in search of news—first to the Chamber of Deputies. This same advance of the procession was stopped

at the bridge by the National Guard. All seemed quiet. Drove on to the Hôtel de Ville—quiet there; then to the Place de Bastille and up the Column—still no crowd—then back to the Chamber. This was about two o'clock, and we now found an immense crowd, too dense to drive through, so we got out of the cab, and pushed through it. Under the wall, fronting the Chamber, we found Ward, who told us the mob had pushed over the bridge, wrested the bayonets out of the hands of the guards, doubtless by the command of General Courtais, to the cry of 'À bas les baionettes!' and invaded the National Assembly, which they were now forcing to declare war for Poland. Meantime the procession, mustering, they said, eighty thousand strong, was still defiling in front of the Chamber, to the back streets behind, in columns about twelve deep, not armed, but with several flags. The guards, on the wall of the Chamber garden, were flinging down twigs of trees, as trophies, I suppose, and we asked for some, which they willingly pitched us, especially, 'pour une dame.' Mrs. P. hoisted one on the top of her parasol, and I flourished it in my hand, and so with the watchword of 'Vive la Pologne!' the English passed through with clap of hands. The mob seemed on the whole good humoured enough, though every now and then there was a cry of 'À bas les aristocrates!' Thinking that the Exaltés had been contented with showing their power, and with this manifestation for Poland, and not knowing they were then dissolving the Assembly and proclaiming a new government of Barbes, Blanqui, and Co., we went off to the Palais Royal to dinner. There was excitement around; groups of National Guards indignant at the insult offered. Still all seemed over, and Emerson joined us from a lecture of Michelet's, quite innocent of the *émeute*. But during dinner we heard the *rappel*, and out we rushed. Ward ran into a communist café, and directly after we saw his head out of the upstairs window, proclaiming a new Provisional Government, of which he began the list, but was stopped, for fear of the house being burnt. The Paulets went back to their hotel, but I, of course, gave up all thought of leaving that night, and went off with Ward to the Hôtel de Ville. All the way down were detachments of National Guards, marching down; pouring on to the quay from different streets. Curious how the beat of drum stirs the blood. I felt quite reckless. Ward was so earnest for news, that he poked his nose into the face of every officer, which at length procured us a cry of 'Down with the English,' and no wonder, so we retired into the crowd for a moment or two, and then pushed on. In front of the Hôtel de Ville was

a dense mass of bayonets, and for a few minutes all seemed uncertain as to who held the hotel, but at length a body marched in at the gate, probably then arresting Barbes. Finding all of one mind there, I crossed the bridge, and went towards the Chamber. Almost all the way I met battalions of guards and the line hurrying towards the hotel, evidently expecting to fight there, amid cries of 'Vive la Garde Nationale!' 'Vive la Ligne!' Twice I met troops of horse, with two or three large cannon, dragged each by four horses at a round trot. This looked like business. The Chamber was surrounded by troops; the bridge in front possessed by them, and all crossing stopped; so I returned towards the hotel, near which I met Lamartine on horseback, at the head of a troop of horse, returning from the arrest of Barbes. I got close to his horse, and walked or rather trotted with him, amid a tremendous crowd of soldiers and bystanders roaring, 'Vive Lamartine!' 'Vive l'Assemblée Nationale!' 'A bas les Anarchistes!' and rushing up to him to shake hands. He was evidently much excited and exhausted; but he is a fine fellow, with a ruling forehead, keen, fiery eye, and determined lips—the bayonet scratch of the 'red flag day' still scarring his cheek bone. He rode straight up to the door of the assembly. There was a rush after him, in which I joined, and so passed through the cordon of guards, and, thanks to the *émeute*, got a sight of the Assembly, looking in at the side door with the guards, a much better place than the gallery, which I also tried. I heard Lamartine say a few words, and Garnier Pages and Louis Blanc try to excuse himself, but they would not hear him. The little fellow, with his boyish handsome face, and arms flung up in earnest gesticulations to be heard, looked droll enough. Then Marrast got up, to tell his story. But as I could not hear him, and was half dead with thirst and fatigue, I went off to the nearest café, through the back garden of the Chamber, where, amid the trees, the bayonets were piled, and the men bivouacking, picturesquely enough, under the clear glorious moonshine. At our hotel, I found our party not gone—too late for the train; and about eleven I sallied off again, went to Meurice's, where I found the Cunninghams, Ward, and Milnes, each telling their adventures (Milnes had been in the Assembly all day), and moralizing over the progress of civilization, which permitted a revolution and a counter-revolution; 80,000 mob arrayed against some 129,000 troops, and scarcely a blow struck. Barbes, Courtais, and the other rebels or suspects arrested, and I think only one life lost in the dispersion of some club. I left Meurice's about

one, and finding all quiet, went home to the hotel, and next morning at eight, off we railed, sorry enough to leave Paris. Crossed that evening to Folkestone, a most lovely passage; next evening, Wednesday, to Carlyle's; next to Norwich,* to my parents, to rejoice their hearts with the sight of their son, and home on the 23rd, the following Tuesday."

Returning home, he found Bradford in a much worse plight than that in which he had left it.

"Night drilling, pike buying, monster meetings, troops of soldiers, and of course a very bitter class feeling. But also, for there is no evil in this world without its compensation, a growing sense among the upper classes that they must, for their own sakes, stop the starving of the labourer." "The struggle," he continues in a letter to Mr. Cooper, "may be more or less severe, but I look upon the suffrage as being as good as won; and the question I ask myself and you is, 'What are we to do with it when we get it?' I have my head, and I hope my heart, full of this question of organization of labour; but I confess, as yet, I see but very darkly. Have you any plan? All French brains are now trying to solve the problem, but I look for little help from them, they are so superficial. As to the Communist doctrine of not paying a man in proportion to his work, that *must* be wrong, and how far the principle of association accords with human nature, I am as yet at a loss to determine. The worst of all Socialist plans I have seen is that all have within them, more or less concealed, a damning desire to shirk work. Neither you nor I must be ever discouraged by abuse from either *ouvrier* or *bourgeois*. I am prepared for my full share from both, and all parties, and care little about it, so long as my own conscience does not agree with my assailants."

He was not in error in anticipating attacks from those who

* An American friend who visited Mr. Forster, sen., about this period has given a graphic account of the Norwich home: "When I was in England, in the summer of 1847, I passed nearly a week at Earham Road, and I can never forget the fatherly care and kindness which I received from dear William Forster and the kind hospitality from Anna Forster, who by the way always called me 'the dear young friend from America whose name I cannot recollect.' I was at that time just entering upon manhood, but the picture of that dear old home, its master and its mistress, its stout manservant (a well grown lad), with his oft-recurring message of 'Beggars at the gate, master,' the sleek, comfortable, self-willed pony, and the birds who came in such numbers to drink from the basins placed on the lawn—a little garden for their special use—all these things I say, after the lapse of more than thirty years, are as clearly and distinctly before me as though it were but yesterday that I really saw them. I never met their son, although there now lies before me a little card on which dear William Forster had written in his own hand, when I was about to visit the north of England, 'At Apperley Bridge Station, about half way between Leeds and Bradford, ask for William Edward Forster, half a mile from station.'"

looked upon the political principles he was avowing with dislike and even with dread. Writing to his friend Barclay Fox, on May 26th, he says:—

“I had a very bothersome note from — yesterday, telling me he is discouraged by the political line I had thought proper lately to pursue, and proceeding as follows:—‘In thy speeches thou hast, in my opinion, made use of words and sentiments calculated to mislead thy hearers, and of exciting in them a spirit of dissatisfaction, and disunity with other members of the community. I also am of opinion that some of thy expressions are absolutely untrue. This, together with thy late trip to France, has a good deal shaken my confidence in thee as a prudent discreet man of business.’ The upshot of all which is, that he expresses uneasiness about the money lent me. To this I have replied, ‘That the people here regarding me as their friend, I was compelled to speak, which I have done conscientiously, in the way I thought most likely to preserve order; that I believed I had helped to keep order, and that I had been throughout backed by several of our leading Friends and our mayor, who was allowed to be one of our first men of business, and that my trip to Paris was no ways political, but merely a holiday excursion. . . .’ I find the state of the town most alarming; the physical forceists have gained a strength in my absence which I almost think I could have prevented. Large numbers of men are armed and drilling nightly, and there is of course much fear and suspicion, and a bitter class feeling.”

He pursued his own course, in spite of this communication from one of those who had advanced capital when he entered upon business. Three days after writing the above letter he notes in his diary:—

“We had a slight Chartist fray here. The soldiers, of whom there are nearly a thousand in the town, were called out to help the specials to arrest some drillers. There were some stones thrown and heads broken, but not mine, the stones flying over my head. All the inconvenience to me was patrolling to four in the morning and being hooted by one party and abused by the other, Joshua Pollard attributing the row to me; but as my own conscience is clear, I care not for that. My course is plain enough: to help the people to obtain peaceably their due, use all possible efforts to put down the rascals who mislead them and fatten on their misery, and above all to strive all in my power to rescue them from starvation.”

The reference which he makes in the foregoing passage to his unpopularity with both sides refers only to a passing ebul-

lition of excited feeling on the part of the working men engaged in the agitation. They clung to him loyally, not only then but for long afterwards. Yet the intense admiration which he had evoked by his open sympathy with their just demands was not stimulated by any want of frankness on his part in combating what he believed to be their errors. About this period a movement was set on foot amongst the Chartists of Bradford to procure as a candidate for the representation of the borough a notorious Chartist in London, whose name was identified not only with the most advanced and indeed revolutionary political opinions, but with certain romances of a distinctly objectionable character. The movement was supported with enthusiasm by many working men, and a meeting was called to consider the desirableness of immediately inviting this person to come forward. Mr. Forster went to the meeting armed with the objectionable book of which the proposed candidate was the author, and in spite of the protests uttered by many present he insisted upon reading to them from the work a series of extracts which sufficiently indicated the character of the writer. He appealed to them earnestly to say whether they thought that a profligate, whatever his political views might be, was fit to represent honest men, and the impression which he made upon them was so great that the proposed candidature was forthwith abandoned.

In April, 1849, Forster re-visited Ireland. He did so in part to renew his acquaintance with the friends whom he had made during the former year, but chiefly that he might join Mr. Carlyle, who was then making his memorable journey through the country. Carlyle was in the company of Mr. Duffy, and Forster used to tell how when he reached Castlebar, where his friends were staying, his inquiries after them excited the suspicions of the guard of the train, who took a patriotic interest in Mr. Duffy's welfare, and who, fearing that the Englishman might be in the service of the police, showed a strong desire to put him out of the way. He found the country in a state of miserable disorganization. "Thanks to the Poor Law, no famine; but the cabins unroofed, the tenants in the workhouse, or underground, or emigrated; the landlords many of them ran away or hiding in houses for fear of bailiffs." A visit which he paid to two hundred and fifty families ejected from their holdings on the estate of Sir Roger Palmer deserves notice.

"Their cabins," he says, "were on the lands of a middle man, a namesake of Sir Roger's, and they say the probable heir to his large estates; a man who had been in the receipt

of some £1200 or £1300 a year, but now in the most abject poverty. A good house with beautiful grounds and furniture all swept away. I have rarely seen anything more touching than his wife, an elegant, sweet-looking lady, with six fine children, who was striving with her hopeful looks to keep her husband from utter distraction, teaching her children herself, and finding it, I believe, hard work to feed them. I went over the Ballina Workhouse, which is in most excellent management, but fearfully full, and it is hard to say which is the most pitiable, the sight we saw of the men hiding in their houses, or this of their being cooped up in hopeless, listless idleness."

A few days later he and Carlyle were the guests of Lord George Hill at Ballyan.

"I doubt," he says, "whether a man could be found more possessed with a sense of duty and active benevolence than Lord George, and yet with a stern resolve and patient determination, which no difficulty can daunt or tire. The tone and the manner of fatherly love with which he spoke in sympathy and encouragement to every one he met, knowing the names and circumstances of every cottier, were most beautiful to witness. Any chance, however, of his driving industry into the present generation of his tenantry seems but hopeless. Everything in his house is very complete, and there is the elegance of high breeding beaming over a most well-ordered household; but the utmost simplicity, not to say economy, which I fear his benevolence compels him to exercise. Breakfast at eight, dinner at one, and the like. His effectiveness, his happy blending of love and justice, and his utter absence of all cant, make him a man after Carlyle's heart, and he is in raptures with him. I am glad he should meet so good a specimen of the high evangelical school."

Another visit to Paris followed the trip to Ireland, and he took with him as his companion Mr. Thomas Cooper. Then came hard work at Bradford, not merely in business, but in performance of his duties as a guardian. The cholera was very bad in the town, and he had much to do with the work of providing doctors and nurses and coffins for the victims. In company with his friend, the Rev. W. Black, and others, he did not hesitate in the discharge of this duty to visit the patients in their houses, and it was in no small measure owing to his energy that the disease, which had raged with great violence in some of the neighbouring towns, was beaten off.

The disturbing elements which surrounded his outward life, as well as the life of the nation at this time, had their

counterpart within his breast. The year 1848 was marked by a spiritual, as well as by a political crisis in his history. His intimacy with Carlyle, Emerson, Sterling, and others, was bearing its natural fruit, in leading him to study anew, and from a fresh standpoint, the great problems of existence. All his sympathies, the love of his whole heart indeed, were on the side of faith. The boy who had listened with undoubting reverence to the earnest pleading of Stephen Grellet, had developed into a man who believed that in the Christian religion was to be found the supreme moral and spiritual power, both over individual souls, and over the world at large, and in this belief he never wavered. But his eager and inquiring mind could not remain torpid or quiescent, whilst in that atmosphere of intellectual activity which he now breathed, and during this year, 1848, he may be said to have passed through the storm and stress period of his life. It was a spiritual crisis such as comes to every thinking man at one time or another.

A friend who knew him intimately at that period, writing of his recollections of their intercourse, says, "He never held back—it was itself no slight test of the reality of his friendship—the disturbance that had come to his faith; and I noted, and it was the greatest consolation as I thought of his fine soul detached from the safe moorings of a steadfast faith, that his doubts and difficulties were ever expressed in words of regret for what he confessed to be a great loss." Whatever indeed might be his intellectual difficulties, his heart clung to the faith he had learned from the lips of his father, and throughout the remainder of his life all that was best in him was drawn out by his deep reverence for religion. Still the fact must be noted, that while he was contending with all the outward perplexities associated with his political convictions, he was also engaged in a spiritual and intellectual conflict not less severe.

It was whilst he was suffering from these perplexities, that he had the pleasure of receiving a visit from Emerson, in whose philosophical writings he had felt the deepest interest, and whose influence could hardly fail to make itself felt in the formation of his opinions. "He—Emerson—decidedly improves upon acquaintance—is really social, and both willing and able to talk on all subjects, and what is far more fascinating, to listen. I was amused with his description of the New England transcendental clique, wherein intellectual and æsthetic culture appears to have been carried to a high point. I tried to discover whether the absence of any outward expression of

religious faith had sapped morality, but I could not discover that it had. Still, that proves nothing either way, as the stamp left by Puritanism is not yet obliterated. What I want to discover with these people is—first, do they resist temptation? Secondly, if so, how—by what help, or by what power?

“It strikes me that Emerson’s influence—for *power* is not a word for him—arises from clearness of view, rather than depth of insight, combined with an honest love of truth, and most perfect independence of thought. He has a pair of good keen eyes, relies on them only, and tells you exactly what he sees. He is silently dogmatical; does not intrude his views, or bear down yours, but lets you see that your opposition has little weight with him; that, in fact, all opposition is a matter of much indifference. Altogether he seems a man whose first impression disappoints, but who improves on you as you know him, till at last he pretty well comes up to your previous estimate.”

His father came to visit him shortly after he had entertained Emerson, and Forster seems to have been struck afresh by the strong points in his character. Referring to his father’s visit, he says, “I have been vastly impressed with his liberality of thought and feeling, and very much struck with the way in which his heart and head appear to be occupied with plans for the temporal good of his fellow-creatures, as though this life must be looked after before the other. Almost all his objects—care of the poor, hospitals, soup kitchens, sanitary improvements, and the like, and even education, peace, anti-slavery, and other such agitations—bear quite as much on the condition of the body as the soul; as though he now thought his duty to be rather to bring about the results of Christianity, than to preach its doctrines. Possibly, however, his tone and conversation may give me this impression on account of his awful reverence for religion, as though it was almost profanity to talk thereof.”

Mr. Forster was no self-centred man. “He fought his doubts and gathered strength.” Like many another who has passed through the same experience, he found that the problems of life, as they affected those who surrounded him, were still more urgent in their demand for consideration, than those problems which affected himself alone. We have seen how deeply he had been impressed by the social and political movement in France, which the year had witnessed, and we have seen also that, at this period of his career, he had a strong leaning towards the better side of Socialism, seeing, as

he believed, in some form of State help a remedy for those social ills which had led the working classes of this country into Chartism, and the working classes of other countries into revolution. Accordingly, in October, 1848, he made a deep impression on the mind of Bradford by three lectures on "Pauperism, and its proposed Remedies," which he delivered at the Mechanics' Institute. His audience, we are told, was chiefly composed of men of the working classes, many of them Chartists, and his theme was that which Carlyle had tersely expressed as the "condition of England question."

In his own characteristic fashion, Forster, in the course of these lectures, discussed with something like judicial impartiality, the *pros* and *cons* of theories with which he himself was wholly unable to sympathize. He took his hearers into his confidence, as it were, and thought aloud in their presence, regarding such subjects as Communism, St. Simonism, and competition. His first lecture may be summed up as a protest against that *laissez faire* doctrine which Carlyle had condemned so strongly: his second was an exposition of the truths of political economy, chiefly those set forth by John Stuart Mill, and the moral to which they pointed; whilst the third was a consideration of the practical question, "What can Government properly do to raise the standard of comfort among the masses of the people and to lessen pauperism?"

It is not necessary now to give at any great length theories, some of which were abandoned by Mr. Forster himself in later years; yet his opinions at this stage are interesting as denoting his position with regard to one of the great standing problems of our time. His lecture, which was full of graphic illustrations (as, for example, when he told his hearers how he had gone to see in Paris Louis Blanc's tailors' shop, much desiring to possess a pair of Communist trousers, but on seeing the work turned out, felt that he must go elsewhere to obtain that which he required), ended with certain direct recommendations. The first was for the fuller employment of paupers: "In order that this should be carried out it was necessary that we should have a new poor law. Our present poor law was conducted on the Communist principle, and taught men to shirk work. The test work was no work, it was a mere test of destitution, putting men to an employment which was purposely made uncomfortable in order that they might be frightened from applying for relief. He would abolish this Communist system of pauperism, and replace it by a system which should pay men according to their work.

Instead of shutting men up in union houses, he would put them on farms with spades in their hands, and then tell them to work or want. No doubt there were difficulties in the way; but it was better to try an experiment in spade husbandry than bury our money in a hole. When he knew that farms could be got, that spades could be bought, and that there were men praying to use these spades whilst money was being wasted which would pay for their using them, he could not believe that it was impossible to get that money and those spades and those men together and put them upon this work. Were there no other means for the extinction of poverty? Such means were to be found in colonization for example. No man believed more firmly than himself that it would be an injustice to force any one of our fellow-citizens, because he was poor, to exile himself from his native land. But if a man wished to go, and had no means of going, the Government were bound to help him; first, because it was their interest to do so; and, secondly, because it was their duty. Another aid in the extinction of poverty was the lightening of the burden upon the labourer and a fresh arrangement of taxation. Others would be found in all spurs to agricultural improvement, everything which would increase the supply of food by increased facilities of production and communication, and those political and social reforms which, by giving freedom in land and allowing capital to be turned upon it, would increase the supply of food without the unfairness and hindrance of game preserves or entail laws and political landlords, who refuse leases and prefer to take their rents in votes as well as money. But although much might thus be done by changes in our law and our social systems, a grave duty was imposed upon workmen themselves, for much of their misery was of their own causing, owing to their want of self-denial and self-control. Knowledge was wanted, and it was the duty of the Government to teach them. Unfortunately the public belief seemed to be that if the State were to teach it would also preach and thrust religious dogmas of its own upon the children whom it gathered into schools. 'What right have you to tax me for the purpose of educating other people's children?' was a question continually being asked. To that question he replied that it was better to tax a country for a good than for an evil. By suffering ignorance to exist we were leading hundreds of our working population to ruin. Private efforts were inadequate to the task of education; it was the duty of the State to provide instruction for the mind as well as food for the body, because the State was able to do it most effectually."

Before sitting down, the lecturer drew attention to another question which stood in the way of all our efforts to raise England from her pauperism—the question of the misery of Ireland. “The only way to benefit Ireland was to make it a home instead of a prison, and he saw no better way to mend this condition than by dealing the land out in small allotments.”

Altogether this course of lectures form a valuable declaration of Mr. Forster's views, whilst the closing passage, which is abridged above from a contemporary report, has a peculiar significance when viewed in the light of the lecturer's subsequent career. The report from which the above passages have been quoted states that at the close of the lecture Mr. Hole, of Leeds, rose for the purpose of correcting one or two misrepresentations of the lecturer in regard to Communism. A communication from Mr. Hole lies before me, and it states how at the close of the debate, in which he had appeared as the opponent of the opinions held by the lecturer, Mr. Forster took him home with him to his house at Rawdon.

“Although I had opposed him, he seemed to like me none the worse,” says Mr. Hole, “and I noticed this peculiarity of his through all his after career; namely, that he was pre-eminently fair and friendly to his opponents. After this I frequently visited his house. His table was a veritable Noah's Ark. All sorts of notabilities in politics and religion were met together there of the most opposite views to his own and to each other's.”

The lectures themselves excited more than passing observation and interest. A special meeting was held in the Mechanics' Institute to discuss Mr. Forster's theories, and though many were found who opposed him, it is evident from the contemporary records that from that time forward he became increasingly prominent as one of the political leaders of the West Riding. These lectures, combined with the reputation which he had acquired in Yorkshire by his known association with some of the most advanced minds of the time, his experiences in Ireland, and his visit to Paris, secured for him many invitations to lecture in different towns in the neighbourhood of his own home, and his figure became a familiar one on the public platforms of that part of the West Riding. “I have taken quite a passion for talking,” he writes to one of his friends, and he adds, “I talk my lectures, not read them.” To this method he clung throughout his whole career, and it cannot be doubted that much of the force with which his sentiments were conveyed to those who had heard

him, was due to the directness and simplicity of his manner and language. Indeed, to the last, in all his speeches the familiar colloquial element was invariably present and was not seldom predominant.

It was about this time, whilst he was grappling with these hard social problems, that he wrote as follows to one of his friends in Ireland, a lady who had just lost a near and dear relative :

“I was greatly shocked to hear of the heavy affliction which has come upon you at last so suddenly. She looked so sweet, so heaven-like, when I saw her in the carriage, that I felt that earth had little hold over her, and it would have been cruel to her, dear creature, to bind her to it, even could we have done so. But it is a heavy blow to all who knew her. I feel myself as though in truth a link was gone in the chain of friends which bind my heart to life, and to you it is a terrible loss, to *you* especially. I am anxious to know how you all are. You must not grieve overmuch ; but it is no use saying you *must* not. Grief is better expressed than repressed, and when grief overwhelms us there is little comfort in the truth, which after all is a truth, that life's peace is seldom gained until its pleasures and joys have been lost. But words are of no use in a case like this, and I will not weary you with them.”

It is difficult in the story of the life of a public man to bring into its due prominence those private characteristics which are, after all, dearer to such a man's friends than the power which he displays or the fame which he wins ; but it would be a most false and imperfect portraiture of Mr. Forster which revealed nothing of that tenderness of heart which made him the most sympathetic of friends, sympathetic when he had to rejoice with those who did rejoice ; but infinitely more sympathetic and tender when his heart was moved by the sorrows of those around him.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE, AND LIFE AT BURLEY.

IF the closing years of the third decade of Forster's life proved to be his period of storm and stress, the following ten years were those which witnessed his most rapid growth in preparation for the service of his country. They are years full of incident and of interest; but it is impossible, without carrying this narrative far beyond reasonable limits, to dwell upon them in detail. His private life during this period underwent the happiest of changes, by his marriage with Jane Arnold, the daughter of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby.

It is obviously impossible for the biographer to dwell upon Mr. Forster's married life. Yet all who had the privilege of knowing him intimately, can bear their testimony to the fact that Mr. Forster himself was never weary of acknowledging his indebtedness to the wife whom he cherished with a chivalrous reverence, not too common in the present age, and hardly to have been expected in his case, by those who judged him merely by his outward characteristics. The union was one which added immensely, not to his happiness only, but to the extent of his power of serving others. His admission into a family of such intellectual distinction as that of Dr. Arnold insensibly widened his sympathies, and brought his mind into contact with ideas of which he had known comparatively little before.

Not that it is to be supposed that association with this new circle of friends in any degree weakened the principles which he had held up to the time of his marriage, and which were founded upon convictions of the most serious character. To those principles he clung as firmly as ever. But at the same time the new ideas and the new influences which were now brought to bear upon him had their inevitable result in widening his sympathies and modifying his judgments. A friend of the Arnolds, who had never seen Mr. Forster, and

knew him only by his public reputation at this time, drew from the sources of information at her command the following somewhat strikingly accurate picture of him:—

“I have been gleaning information gradually about Mr. Forster, but still want much more to make the picture perfect. . . . I think I will give you a bit of my imperfect picture to amuse you. A man naturally of great power of mind, to a great degree self-educated, frightened of nothing, willing to go on boldly and take the consequences of all his thoughts, to a degree that few people will sympathize with. A man whom every one will respect, even if they abuse him; very likely to become a great man in the country and the leader of the Radical party, if he is not too superior to them to be able to find sufficient points of sympathy with them to enable them to work together. Join this with strong affections and practical habits, and you have a bit of my imperfect picture.”

Almost the first result of his marriage was his separation from the Society of Friends, with which his ancestors had been so long connected. This, however, was not voluntary on his part. It was due to the fact that mixed marriages were at that time visited with the penalty of expulsion from the society. A deputation from the meeting at Rawdon visited Mr. Forster, when it became known that he was about to marry the daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England. The good Friends composing it solemnly warned him against the step he was about to take, and implored him to reconsider his decision. It need hardly be said that the emissaries of the society had no idea that they would succeed in their mission. They had, however, to discharge the duty imposed upon them by the ordinances of their body. Having failed in their attempt to dissuade Mr. Forster from his intended marriage, they reminded him of the fact that such a marriage would entail his expulsion from the society, and then, their task being completed, heartily congratulated him, as private friends, upon the approaching termination of his bachelor life, and his happiness in having secured a partner in every way so eligible. Years afterwards, Mr. Forster, having to reply to a deputation of Quakers, who had waited upon him in his ministerial capacity, said, “Your people turned me out of the society for doing the best thing I ever did in my life.” He still, however, attended meetings of the society, and retained the deepest interest in all that affected the welfare of its members. In a letter written on the Sunday evening immediately before his marriage, he says:

“I have just come from evening meeting, a silent, and to

me a somewhat solemn leave-taking of my Quakerism, and yet there is much, very much of Quakerism that will cling to me to my dying day, and on the whole I am glad that the formal bond which tied me to it is severed."

It was long before his marriage—indeed, very soon after he went to Bradford—that he gave up the peculiar Quaker dress. He did this in a manner which illustrates the energy and thoroughness with which he carried out any line of action upon which he had determined. Many of the Friends around him were modifying their peculiar dress, creeping out of it by inches, as though they were in the hope that the change from the garb of Fox to that of the ordinary man of the world would hardly be noticed by their acquaintances. Forster did not adopt this course; but, having determined to abandon the dress of his youth, he changed his appearance in a single hour, and astonished his friends by suddenly presenting himself before them attired in garments of the latest and most irreproachable fashion.

It was in the summer of 1850 that Mr. Forster's marriage with Miss Arnold took place. At that time she was in very delicate health, and their honeymoon was necessarily a brief one. One of his wife's brothers, Mr. William D. Arnold, held an appointment as Director of Public Instruction in India. There was something in his character which specially drew forth towards him Forster's affection and esteem, and in course of time they became the warmest of friends. It was whilst he was on his wedding journey with his wife, that Forster addressed the following letter to his brother-in-law:—

To MR. W. D. ARNOLD.

"Minehead, August, 1850.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,

"We are in the quietest of inns, in the cleanest of towns—a small fishing-port, opened up into a watering-place, lying snug between the Quantock Hills and the Bristol Channel. It is new scenery to —, and she enjoys it greatly, and she is, I do think, better to-day than I have seen her before or since her illness, and I am very sanguine that the journeying and the sea breezes will strengthen her greatly. . . . I don't know whether by this time a small packet has reached you from us. . . . We stuffed in a few books, among others a small pamphlet of mine, in defence of an old Quaker worthy, against Macaulay's charges in his history, which I suppose you have read. On the whole it has been well received by the press—thanks to the hero's merits, not the advocate's—but I thought

interest for your sister might make you curious enough about her husband to read it. Carlyle's pamphlets will amuse you. They have had an immense reading, but probably less effect than almost any of his writings. They are so one-sided in their stern, almost lurid gloom and preference of the past to the present; and besides, it is too late now to try to whip the world into good manners. It has grown past the flogging age, and all the movement got by the beneficent whip nowadays is, thanks to the pig principle within us, a retrograde movement. Still, the power of his sincerity is great, and he wields his whip sincerely enough, as I saw plainly this time last year, when travelling with him in Ireland. I see *you* are rather Carlylish in India. I can scarcely wonder at it, for offences must abound. Nevertheless, I sometimes long for a year in India. It would be refreshing and most interesting, and somewhat useful too, I fancy, to correct the reforming, changing, destroying, venturous spirit, fostered by these days of go-ahead speculations, by the solemn changeless conservatism of the gorgeous golden East. Besides, I should travel along on a reforming hobby of my own. . . . The point which seems to me most immediately noteworthy is the taxation, the mode of raising the revenue, which, if rumour lies not, is a grievous oppression, weighing down the mass of poor cultivators by an equal intolerable burden, more intolerable even than the capricious injustice of the old despots, because more systematic, and so making the very goodness of our government, which is its strength and order and discipline, its worst evil. How then the revenue is raised and how it can be with the least suffering to the poor man, is the first question I should ask myself in India; and then another question, much deeper and harder and wider to solve, but even more interesting—how can the hidden resources of the Indian mind be developed? How can the Indian be put on his legs, if not on the same platform with ourselves? In what formula must we express to him the lesson of the day, which is *Excelsior!*—in a word, how can the Indian be taught self-government?"

At the close of their wedding journey, husband and wife took up their abode at Rawdon, where they spent eighteen happy months in a place which must always be associated with the first marked development of Mr. Forster's career as a public man. Some business anxieties, however, began about this time to weigh upon him, and eventually led to his removal from Rawdon to Burley, Wharfedale. He and his partner, Mr. Fison, had acquired an old cotton mill at Burley, for the

purpose of converting it into a worsted manufactory. Capital was needed in order to complete the purchase and to make the necessary improvements in the property of which they had become possessed. Mr. Forster found it necessary to reduce the establishment he had maintained at Rawdon, whilst, for the purpose of maintaining a closer supervision over the business, he determined to live near the mill. Accordingly, he built the little house called Wharfeside, on the banks of the Wharfe river, which he continued to occupy down to the time of his death. It is a modest structure, chiefly noticeable for the romantic beauty of its situation and for the taste and care which have been lavished upon the grounds surrounding it. The windows of the library, which was the apartment chiefly used by Mr. Forster during his lifetime, command a view of a lovely stretch of the river Wharfe, which glides within a few feet of the house itself.

A word must be said in passing regarding this particular apartment in the house, for it was the room which during the remainder of his life was that most closely associated with its owner. Nay, it may be said to have been associated with him even before it came into existence, for it was, as nearly as possible, a reproduction of his library at Rawdon. The book-cases which still line the walls at Wharfeside were those which were made for him when he went to Rawdon; the very window-curtains are those which he bought to complete the furniture of his bachelor abode. Homely comfort is the prevailing characteristic of the modest room, though the volumes which fill the shelves give evidence of the fact that the master of the house was not an ordinary man. One noticeable feature of the apartment deserves remark. There is no suggestion of the solitude of the study about it. It bears its own character stamped plainly upon it. The visitor can see at once that it is not merely a library, but the room in which the master of the house and his family lived. The simplicity of Forster's personal tastes and habits are represented by the plainness of the furniture, the absence of anything pretentious; but at the same time the social side of the man is displayed in the fact that, even when sitting among his books and studying the problems, social and political, which he was ever striving to solve, he evidently loved to have those dear to him around him. The library was always the centre of attraction at Wharfeside. Here Forster wrote at one table, his wife writing at another. Here he read and studied, ever and anon pausing in his reading to debate with those around him some knotty point raised by the author whom he was perusing. Here he

entertained his friends with that fresh and vigorous talk, full of picturesque and striking phrases, full too of a healthy humour and a broad geniality and human sympathy, the memory of which must be treasured by all who knew him. It was here in his later days, when he was in the midst of the battle of life, and suffering most severely from the buffetings of fortune, that he showed to those around him that his temper had not been soured, nor his sympathies narrowed or hardened by his experiences in public life. A thousand bright and happy memories cluster around this library at Wharfeside, and of each the master of the house seems to be the central figure. Even now, to those who knew him, the room seems to be pervaded by his presence. There is his favourite chair, still standing in the old place by the fireside; there are the books which he loved looking down with friendly aspect upon us; there is his despatch-box by his writing-table; above all, there is the same lovely stretch of the river, opening up from the window a vista of peaceful beauty not easily to be matched. From every room in the house, indeed, views of remarkable picturesqueness are to be obtained. The river, the woods, the green fields of Wharfedale, and the heather-clad hills beyond, combine in pictures of singular and romantic beauty.

"Wharfeside," writes his daughter, Mrs. Robert Vere O'Brien, "and the family life within it were like a body and mind, the one moulding and transforming the other, so close was the connection between the house and its occupants. The modest gabled house, with its deep porch and overhanging eaves, never lost the character first impressed upon it in the days when the four walls rose above the almost treeless field in which it stood, and when Mr. and Mrs. Forster used to drive over from Rawdon to watch the progress of their new home.

"But if Wharfeside did not change, it certainly grew, though by slow and gradual degrees, like the sheltering trees and shrubberies round it, and the creepers on its walls. A bay window was thrown out here, a room was built on there, an additional gable introduced in another place, each new addition fitted into the original fabric by the ingenious and sympathetic architect who had built the house, and who seemed endowed with a special gift for making these frequent and necessary alterations in such a way as to be as harmonious and imperceptible as possible. The bare field was speedily transformed into lawns, flower-beds, and shrubberies, each tree in which, we used to maintain, was known individually

and personally to my father and mother, so deeply attached were they to these trees of their own planting.

“As the laying-out of the garden and grounds advanced, the belt of tall beeches crowning the high river bank, and the few noble oak trees that had once seemed scattered aimlessly about the field, appeared to fall into their right place as the natural setting and shelter to the picturesque house which had grown up amongst them; and to the four children who came from India seven years later to their home on the Wharfe, to the ivy-covered house embosomed in trees, standing in a garden bright with flowers and smooth-shaven green lawns, the original Wharfeside, as it was described to them, seemed as difficult to picture in imagination as the marshes of Westminster before London was built.

“But from first to last the real core and nucleus of Wharfeside, the centre round which everything seemed to have formed, was the library. This room was the connecting link between my father’s old surroundings and his new, for its exact proportions and size, the low-raftered ceiling, the dark mahogany bookcases that lined the walls, were copied, or had been transported bodily from his library at Rawdon, and the heavy red velvet curtains drawn every night across the wide window that filled up nearly the whole of one wall, were a purchase of his bachelor days of which he was not unreasonably proud. This library was *the* room of the house. Wharfeside never possessed a drawing-room, properly so-called. From the first it was in the library that my mother’s sofa, her writing-table, her flowers and books were established, and this room was the scene of that active joint life, that perfect companionship in all their plans, occupations, and interests, which began with those early years of quiet work at Wharfeside.

“In later times the library was still the family room, as might have been seen by the various tokens of feminine, not to say juvenile, occupations intruding amongst the piles of newspapers, the letters, Blue books, and despatch boxes, which might well have claimed a monopoly of right to the limited space available in the small library, now the workroom of a busy public man.

“But so long as the sanctity of his writing-table in the corner was respected, my father would cheerfully tolerate this joint occupation of what might naturally have been considered his special room, and the pleasant book-lined library, with its outlook over river and meadow and distant moor, was still the common resort of the family. Nor would even the dogs

and the Persian cat ever consent to forego their right of free entry to this favourite room at all times and seasons, a right which was always freely admitted by their master. Often have I seen him, when in the thick of preparing for some important speech, go suddenly to open the door in obedience to the summons of an impatient colley dog whining for admittance. Yarrow would then shuffle himself across the room to his accustomed corner, curl himself round, and only emerge when the time came for his master to break off a long morning's work to take a short stroll before post time, and on these occasions Yarrow's company was always indispensable."

It was in February, 1852, that the house was finished, and that Mr. and Mrs. Forster removed to it from Rawdon. The Wharfedale valley has been made famous in art by the brush of Turner. All who know it will agree that there are few more beautiful dales in Yorkshire, or indeed in England. Mr. Forster's new home, though within easy reach of Bradford and Leeds, was in the very midst of the most beautiful scenery of the valley. As at Rawdon, so at Burley, Mr. Forster's house became the centre to which thoughtful men of very different ranks and classes were constantly drawn. Any one engaged in endeavouring to effect a social or political reform was certain to find a hearty welcome from the owner of Wharfeside, and that welcome was all the warmer if the person to whom it was extended was one who had suffered for the truth's sake. Escaped slaves from the United States, ex-Chartist prisoners, men who were tabooed by society because they were believed to be heterodox on questions of social polity or religious faith, and ultra-Radicals, who were denounced by their neighbours as revolutionists, found hospitable shelter beneath his roof. But whilst exercising this varied hospitality, Mr. Forster continued to devote himself with great energy to his business. He and Mr. Fison had made a bold experiment in transplanting their works from Bradford to Burley, and in order that their action might be justified by its results, the greatest care was needed. Happily, the experiment was completely successful. Business life at Burley was not quite the same thing as at Bradford. The place was a village, and not a bustling town. It followed that Forster and his partner naturally took the chief places in the little community, and thus it came about that they were brought into positions nearly akin to that of the many-acred country squire. They were not merely employers of labour, they were the friends of the people among whom they lived. The villagers of Burley

looked to them to take the lead in all questions which affected the welfare of the place. It need hardly be said that Mr. Forster and Mr. Fison continued to take the deepest interest in their workpeople.

Writing to her mother, in November, 1850, Mrs. Forster tells of one of the first meetings between her husband and the industrial community of which he was now the head: "William is gone to Bradford this evening to attend an education meeting, and as I must not expect him back till eleven or twelve o'clock, I shall have time to give you an account of our meeting at Burley last night, which was very interesting. It was intended partly to celebrate the getting to work at the new mills, and partly the opening of a large room to serve the purposes of reading and concert and class room. It will certainly be a very convenient room for the purpose, and looked very well last night, when it was well lighted with gas and filled with more than five hundred people, chiefly, of course, belonging to the mill. Dearest William took the opportunity of explaining to them all the plans which have been formed for their comfort and benefit. The cooking apparatus has been brought from Bradford, and the library is to be immediately opened. Mr. Fison and William engage also to keep a savings bank for the workpeople, and to receive any sums, from sixpence up to £25, giving ten per cent. interest up to £5, and five per cent. afterwards. He explained all this to them, and urged shortly the wisdom and duty of saving whilst times were still good. He also told them about the reading-room, and that the large room would be open two evenings in the week for men's classes, two evenings for girls' classes (as soon as a matron can be found to superintend them), and the remaining two evenings for the musicians to practise."

Hardly anywhere in England, indeed, could an industrial community be found in which the mutual confidence between masters and servants was greater than at Burley. Mr. Forster used to be proud of the fact that his own workpeople were not afraid to tell him how much money they were worth. They freely put their money into a savings bank which he established and managed for them. In all their troubles they came to him, as to their best friend, and sympathy and advice, not to speak of more substantial assistance, were never wanting on his part when they were needed. It was said, at the time of his death, that no one could really know him who did not know the character of his relations with his own people in Wharfedale. Through storm and shine, in all the years of

his life from 1852 onwards, he was at least certain of the love and the confidence of his friends at Burley.

A vivid idea of his relations with the working men of the district is afforded by the sketch of Forster about this period with which I have been favoured by Mr. J. M. Ludlow. That gentleman writes as follows:—

“I knew William Forster by sight long before I had spoken to him, or even knew his name. In the year 1838 or 1839, an uncle of mine, the late Mr. F. Brown, founded the first organization for the benefit of India, the ‘British India Society.’ I sympathized with him, and in some small degree helped him. The committee of the society had several ‘Friends’ upon it (the very starting-point of the society was an address delivered by my uncle in the Friends’ great meeting-house in Bishopsgate Street), including, I think, two of the Forsters. I used always to attend the public meetings of the society in London, and when either of the Forsters who were on the committee were present, used generally to see with them a very long lad, with a long, hard-featured face, who, I was once told, was the nephew of the Mr. Forster present. Although, in fact, my senior by three years, he was then quite beardless, whilst I was hirsute, so that he always looked the youngest person in the room.

“Years after, when I was editor of the *Christian Socialist* (1851), I took a ‘co-operative tour,’ chiefly on foot, through Lancashire and Yorkshire, in search of the then thinly scattered co-operative societies, in company, during part of the time, with T. Hughes. I had been strongly recommended, I think by my dear friend and then colleague Lloyd Jones, to call on Mr. Forster, a manufacturer of Bradford, who had expressed some sympathy with the co-operative movement. My desire to know him was further stimulated by the high terms in which I found working-men at Bradford speak of him—‘the only mill-owner,’ as I stated in the published notes of my tour, whom at that time I had ‘ever heard claimed by the working-men as a friend.’ I called upon him accordingly, and at once recognized in him the lanky lad of the British India Society’s meetings. He kindly asked me to dine and sleep at his house at Rawdon. We talked on till late at night, our conversation deepening as it went on. He was then just entering into that Christian faith which afterwards so fully possessed him. He had had an article on Maurice’s ‘Theology’ rejected by the *Westminster Review*, to which he had been hitherto a contributor, on the ground that it was too Christian. But he was still beset with much of that ‘honest doubt’ in

which, as Tennyson tells us, there 'lives more faith' than 'in half the creeds.' Leaning his two elbows on the table so as to cover his face with his two bony hands—an attitude which, but for its angularity in him, reminded me entirely of Mr. Maurice in his moments of deepest thought and feeling—he began to pour out his soul to me, seeking help in his perplexities. I listened with a kind of awe, feeling how weak I was to help so strong a man. But God must have enabled me to say something worth his hearing, for at last, after a few minutes' silence, he threw up his head, and said, 'Thank you. You have given me some side-lights which will be of use to me. Now let us go to bed.' From that night I always looked upon William Forster as a friend.

"It is rather singular, however, that never since that first night of our acquaintance did we speak together again on those highest subjects of all which had drawn us closest to one another. If William Forster gained any help from me on that occasion, I also gained help from him. At the time I speak of, I had not recognized the value of Trade Unionism from a social point of view; I saw nothing but co-operation as a means of benefiting the workers. He who had had in his early years of business a sharp fight with the Trade Unions knew better than I what they could do, and I remember his pregnant reply to a question of mine—'Do you think that a strike has ever either raised wages or prevented their being lowered?' 'No; *but the fear of a strike has.*' Such a testimony, from a man in his position, had very great weight with me, and I was all the more glad to have received it, when, a few months later, the occurrence of the great engineers' strike and lock-out of 1852, and the application of the leaders of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers to the Council of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, forced the subject of Trade Unionism directly upon the attention of my friends and myself.

"I do not think I have any letters of William Forster's earlier than of the latter part of 1852. But, from the time of our meeting in the North, he used, when he came up to town, to call at the chambers, No. 3, Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, which I then occupied with T. Hughes, sometimes going into one room, sometimes into the other (but whenever possible all the three of us gathered together), and I remember, on one occasion when he rose to leave, his saying, with that peculiar chuckle of his, 'Well, for a set of revolutionists, I must say you are the pleasantest ones I know!' Whilst we had many a friendly spar together, we looked upon him as a sort of

outside ally in our co-operative campaigns, and it is to him that I referred in the third of a series of lectures on 'The Master Engineers and their Workmen,' delivered February 27th, 1852, in speaking of 'a mill-owner in the woollen trades . . . whom the working-men all around love, and trust, and take pride in as a friend, and will have sooner or later for their representative in Parliament; who will gladly take the chair at co-operative meetings, and encourage attempts at co-operative production, however doubtful of their success—ay, and come up from Yorkshire on a fool's errand, to urge the Government to legalize co-operative associations.'"

Living in the country, Forster had full opportunity for gratifying that love of nature which had marked his character from boyhood. There was one particular, however, in which his life was very different from that of the average country gentleman. For sport, so called, he entertained something like a feeling of abhorrence. From his mother, as a boy, he had learned to detest anything in the nature of cruelty to dumb animals. As he grew older, this feeling seemed to grow stronger. Nothing appeared to rouse him to more intense indignation than any persecution of the animal creation. It followed that he refrained scrupulously from all field sports. He never hunted; and though the heights of Wharfedale are crowned by great stretches of moorland, where the grouse find a congenial home, he never shot, save as a marksman in a volunteer competition. The Wharfe is one of the best trout streams in Yorkshire. But Mr. Forster never fished. It is said, indeed, that the only animal he ever killed was an old cat, whose sufferings he wished to terminate. Some of his friends still remember how anxiously he inquired of them as to the speediest and easiest mode of putting an end to its existence. It was not mere detestation of cruelty to animals that he felt, however. He had a positive affection for them of the strongest kind. The pets of his own household played almost as important a part in the domestic economy, as their human neighbours, and he was miserable if any of them were suffering. When the time came for him to exercise power as one of the ministers of the Crown, he used it with vigour on behalf of his dumb constituents, who had nothing but love to give him in return for the services which he rendered to them. He was able to do something to lighten the sufferings inflicted upon cattle in their transit by railway from town to town, and he did what he could to prevent the needless torture to animals by means of vivisection.

In the public work of Bradford, Mr. Forster, during the

years immediately following his marriage, took a prominent part. He had become chairman of the board of guardians, and he worked hard in the discharge of a task for which he was eminently suited. His position in the Liberal party in the town became stronger as time passed, and he was generally selected to move or second the Liberal candidates for parliamentary election. His lectures, of which mention has already been made, became more numerous and important, whilst practice in public speaking added greatly to his power of impromptu utterance. But although during this period he first became really prominent among the politicians in the north of England, it was not by speech, but by pen, that he made the greatest advance. In 1849, stung into action by the extreme acerbity with which Macaulay had attacked William Penn, he published that pamphlet, of which mention is made in the letter to Mr. W. D. Arnold, vindicating the character of Penn, one of the favourite heroes of the Society of Friends. The pamphlet had a marked success, and did much to mitigate the feeling which Macaulay's strictures upon Penn had occasioned. About the same time Forster wrote to the *Leader* newspaper a series of letters on the "Right to Work," which he pithily described as "a man's right to do his duty." They formed a vigorous indictment of the existing economic system, and led up to the writer's favourite conclusion, that it is the duty of the State to provide work for every member of the community. It was not, however, until he settled at Wharfedale that he secured a position among the contributors to the *Westminster* and *Edinburgh Reviews*. His contributions to the *Westminster*, in particular, were of considerable importance. His first letter to the editor of that periodical was as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Ever since I have seen your prospectus of the *New Westminster*, I have wished to become a contributor to it. Both your prospectus and your public tempting me. Are you full for your second number—viz. your April number? and if not, would you be disposed to choose one among the following subjects, on which you would try an article from me? When I say *try*, of course I mean try with your own eyes' judgment not with the public's; but I should hardly wish to write unless I knew that you were inclined to do that much.

"1. 'Quakerism: its History, Meaning, Purpose, and Prospects; including a sketch of how it came into the world,

what it has done there, and what it has yet to do.' A book called 'Quakerism; or, the Story of my Life' (contemptible enough in itself), would be a peg to hang an article on, the more especially as the eagerness with which in many quarters it has been welcomed is somewhat noteworthy.

"2. 'Professor Maurice, not as a Socialist or Metaphysician, but as a Theologian;' a description of his position in the Church of England, which seems to me most new and important, as being that of the founder of a new school, which more than any other Church school, attempts to solve the questions of the age.

"3. 'Spencer's Social Statics;' criticising what seems to me a *reductio ad absurdum* of the *laissez faire* doctrine; at the same time acknowledging its great merits both as to style and matter.

"4. 'The Kaffir War; as throwing light on our relation with aborigines, whether savage or barbarous;' in which I should attempt to show that we must not abdicate the duty which our right as the strong and the wise gives us to rule the weak and the ignorant, as the philanthropists would wish, still less to misuse that right and turn it into a wrong, as has been our practice, nor to fulfil it by denying to them their rights, as would Carlyle. I have myself little choice about the subject, but possibly the first might suit me best, as I was obliged to study most of the writings of the early Quakers in writing my pamphlet in reply to Macaulay's charges against William Penn, and my Quaker education gives me an opportunity of knowing Quakerism which few have had, who have not at the same time a sectarian bias. In case you incline to receive an article, please let me know when it must be sent in. I suppose you'll name an early day, as you must have time to substitute another in case you find it will not do. My first paper I should wish you to consider as a subscription to your undertaking."

It was in January, 1853, that his contributions to the *Westminster Review* first began to attract general attention, and the article which had this effect was one on the question of American slavery. Middle-aged men and women amongst us can still recall that wonderful uprising of the national conscience on the subject of slavery which followed the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Whatever critics may say of the literary merits of that book, and whatever charges of exaggeration may be brought against it by dispassionate authorities, the fact remains that this romance of negro life

produced a deeper impression upon the minds of the people of England and New England than any other work of fiction which was ever issued from the press. Mrs. Beecher Stowe, by the tale written in the intervals of her attention to the domestic duties which fall to the lot of a poor Congregational minister's wife, had, in a few months, accomplished more than had been effected by all the wise, the learned, and the devoted men who for years had been endeavouring to awaken the conscience of the people of America, and to enlist the sympathies of the people of Great Britain on the subject of the abolition of slavery.

There is no need to say on which side Mr. Forster's sympathies lay in the controversy which now began to rage on both sides of the Atlantic. In England there were still people who affected to question our right to judge our kinsmen with regard to one of their domestic institutions. Forster was not one of these. We have seen him in boyhood eagerly rendering such assistance as he could to his uncle in his anti-slavery labours. He was delighted now with the effect produced by the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and he did his utmost, by speech and pen, to deepen the impression which it had made upon the minds of his fellow-countrymen. "Does Uncle Tom speak the truth?" he asks, in his *Westminster Review* article. "This cry which, echoing from one side of the Atlantic to the other, has found its way from his cabin to the hearts of millions, is it in truth the plaint and the prayer of the sufferer; or is it not rather a cunningly devised fable, so cunning a device, that even when discovered it defies indignation? Is this 'life of the lowly' drawn from the life, or from the artist's imagination? America is the home of the Irish outcast, the workhouse of the English pauper, a workhouse in which he is sure of both room and work. Can it be, then, that within the bounds of that union they separate man and wife; not, indeed, as a condition of age or consequence of improvidence, but as the punishment of weakness, because the strong, by the right of his might, claims the sinews of the husband, or perchance the charms of the wife? Surely in this hospitable region, to which hundreds daily fly from their miseries and mistakes, it cannot be the habit to hunt women because they fly from the ravisher, and mothers because they cling to their children, and strong men because they assert their manhood. . . . In a word, does Mrs. Stowe paint American slavery as it is, or does she not? Most of her readers, we imagine, have answered in the affirmative, almost before they have asked themselves the question: the 'yes' forced out of

their beating hearts by her genius. But is this fair? The good name of a great nation is at stake, and surely it ought not to be blasted by a mere tale, told ever so wisely, until at least its statements have been weighed."

Forster went on, with that eloquence which was only drawn from him under the influence of deep feeling, to discuss the evidence for and against Mrs. Stowe, taking occasion in doing so to speak of the action of the *Times* and of his friend and teacher, Mr. Carlyle, with courageous frankness. He maintained the right of the negro to those privileges of manhood which, in this country as well as in America, many of our most eminent men were at that time united in denying to him. He quoted Blue books and pamphlets, letters, speeches, and reports from the Society of Friends, to show that it was no overcoloured picture which Mrs. Stowe had painted; and, in conclusion, he asked, "How stand the chances of the slave? Law and force are against, but heart and eloquence and genius are for him, and they have a quick eye for the winning side. There are still speeches and sermons without number, and books not a few, against him. But what speeches, and what books! The only books he need care for are the ledgers of the planter, and his Northern creditor. . . . And now this wonderful 'Uncle Tom' is going through the length and breadth of the North; ay! and penetrating also into the South, forcing every one to hear his tale of woe and to ask himself first: 'Can these things be?' and then, 'How long shall they last?' And this question, 'How long?' is not one which men will be contented with asking *themselves*. Oh no! the time is at hand, we have faith to believe, when the citizens of the North will say to their compatriots of the South, 'We do not like this slave owning. You say it is your business; we will take care that it is not ours. If you will have laws which sanction robbery, and order torture, which permit rape, and connive at murder; if you will tear wives from their husbands, and children from their mothers; if you will let men sell their sons to the slave driver, and their daughters to the seducer; if you will make the ignorance of these negroes your excuse for enslaving them, and yet will keep them untaught, and punish those who try to teach them,—we, at least, will not help you. We will no longer be either your slave catchers or their jailors: the soil which belongs to us both, shall be free; our common city shall be a city of refuge; the suppliants who come to us for succour shall not seek it in vain. Nay, further, you tell us to leave these men and women to your mercy, because they belong to you. We cannot do

so; for they are bound to us, by the ties of country, which we cannot sever without their consent. The time was, when they were supposed to be not men, but things, chattels, or property; but now we have discovered they are men, ay, and our fellow-countrymen. We grant that it is your place, your duty, to do justice to them, and we will give you time to fill this place, and fulfil this duty; but if you will not do this duty, nor even acknowledge it to be a duty, if you will neither free these slaves, nor make any attempt to prepare them for freedom, we dare no longer deny the claim of their fellow-citizenship. And upon your heads be the consequences of this admission.’”

When these words were reprinted in the United States, it was not long before the secret of their authorship was revealed, and the Abolitionists knew that in the son of William Forster, the Quaker missionary, and the nephew of Thomas Fowell Buxton, the friend of the slave, they had found a new and valuable ally, whose zeal in the great cause which they had taken up was never permitted for an instant to slacken, until the day when the United States was purged, by the terrible ordeal of blood and fire, of the reproach which had so long rested upon it.

Other contributions of his to the *Westminster Review* about this period were articles on “Kaffir Wars and Cape Policy,” on “British Philanthropy and Jamaica Distress,” “Strikes and Lock-outs,” and “The Foreign Policy of the United States,” whilst a powerful article on the “Autocracy of the Czars” was published in the *Edinburgh Review*; so by pen as well as by speech Forster, in the decade between 1850 and 1860, may be said to have come fully before the public, and to have taken his place among those who were most largely influencing the minds of their fellow-countrymen. With it all, he himself remained outside the circle of active politicians at this period. “I lead a very busy, though most quiet and settled and happy life,” he wrote to one of his friends shortly after his marriage. His time was spent at his place of business, in the local committee-rooms at Bradford, where he was always ready to help any work that commended itself to his sympathies, and above all in his own home at Wharfeside, where in reading and in literary work he found congenial occupation, his constant adviser and companion being his wife.

His life at this period was distinguished chiefly by that “active quietude” of which he spoke in some of his letters. Very busy he was, but it was not in the way most likely to attract the attention of the world. His lectures, his review

articles, his local work in sanitary and educational matters, his eager intercourse with men who were engaged in work which interested him, all tended to bring him gradually nearer to the position which he had long marked out for himself, just as all tended to fit him to fill that position, when he attained it, worthily. But it seemed for the moment as though he was standing aside from the main currents of public life. He had ceased to excite remark by those ebullitions of youthful enthusiasm which in 1848, for example, had drawn upon him the notice of the community in which he lived. But all the time he was winning the confidence of those around him and laying wide and deep the foundations of a great reputation. It was during this period that his deep interest in education first began to take a practical form. His friends, Dr. Hook and Canon Jackson, of Leeds, Canon Robinson, of Bolton Abbey, and Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, found in him one who sympathized most deeply with them in their attempts to reform our educational system, whilst in the schools which he and his partner had established at Burley, Forster had a field of practical usefulness which it delighted him to cultivate. Before 1850 he may be said to have had theories on the question of education. After that date he had something more, a living interest in the question, and a desire to provide for all children of English birth the benefits of a good school, which grew stronger with every year that passed, until the moment came when he was enabled to bring about the realization of his own visions.

His busy life of commercial and intellectual work was disturbed, early in 1854, by a very heavy blow. In October, 1853, his father left England on a renewed mission to the United States. He travelled in Indiana, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Georgia, and Tennessee, appealing to the governors of the slave states through which he passed on behalf of the slaves, and imploring them, if they could not at once terminate the accursed system, to do what they could to mitigate its horrors. He seems to have been received by most of the influential persons whom he visited on this errand with courtesy, if not cordiality; and he had the satisfaction of knowing that his efforts had produced some impression upon those who were at the head of affairs in the United States. Having completed his anti-slavery mission, the veteran preacher felt himself at liberty to enter upon the more exclusively religious part of his engagement amongst the Friends in Tennessee. He had not long, however, been employed in his religious labours, when he was seized with severe illness, at a small wayside house not far from

Knoxville, about twelve miles from Tennessee, where he had stopped to rest. In this little house the good man passed some days of acute suffering, and there, on January 27th, 1854, he died. He was buried in the Friends' burial place at Friendsville, a few days later, and there his remains now lie. No father was ever loved with a deeper, purer devotion, than that which was borne towards William Forster by his son. Though there was much in the characters of the two men which was at variance, the affection and the sympathy which existed between them was never weakened. Throughout his whole life the son entertained a genuine reverence for the virtues of his father, whose example of self-consecration and self-sacrifice shone before him constantly as one to be followed, even amid the vicissitudes of a public life in England.

Forster went at once to his mother, to be with her in her hour of supreme anguish, and he wrote as follows to Barclay Fox, shortly after the tidings had been received :—

“ Earlham Road, Norwich,
“ February 26th, 1854.

“ MY VERY DEAR BARCLAY,

“ I hardly know whether thou wilt have heard of the heavy blow which has come upon me. I have lost my dearest father. The tidings came to my mother last third day evening, but did not come to us till the next morning. He was never able to leave the wayside inn at which he was taken ill, and died on the 27th, after a stupor which lasted nearly two days. Some day I hope to let thee know all the particulars we know, which are, alas! not many; but I cannot bear to write them now. My mother's health is much better than we could have hoped, and she is wonderfully supported, though sometimes very, very low. Dearest Barclay, I cannot tell thee how bitterly I feel that I was so far from being the son to him I might have been.

“ Thine ever,

“ W. E. FORSTER.

“ They could get so very little attendance, that twice large slaveholders, neighbours of the landlord, came to sit up during the night.”

The death of Mr. Forster, senior, made a great gap in the family circle, and it may be well at this point to say something about the relatives who survived him. The “ Forsters of Tottenham ” were all known in the Society of Friends by reason of their philanthropy and their devotion to religious and

benevolent work ; though it was William Forster whose life had attracted most attention on the part of the outside world, and whose labours had been most abundant. One of his companions at the time of his death was his brother Josiah, who for more than twenty years had carried on the school founded by his grandfather at Tottenham, but had subsequently devoted himself to religious and philanthropic missions. The absorbing interest of Josiah's life was the anti-slavery cause. He long survived his brother, living to attain his eighty-ninth year ; and to the very last he was devoted to anti-slavery work in all parts of the world. The youngest brother, Robert, was by profession a land agent ; but, like Josiah and William, he devoted himself largely to labours for the general good. His energies throughout life were mainly devoted to the spread of education, and for more than half a century he was a member of the committee of the British and Foreign School Society.

Forster's aunts, the sisters of his father, shared the philanthropic zeal which was so marked a characteristic of their brothers. One, Anne, was noted for her personal labour among the sick and suffering. Her youngest brother, Robert, who died at the age of eighty-one, had an illness of several years' duration. Anne Forster nursed him tenderly down to the day of his death ; was taken ill immediately after his release from suffering, and survived him only three days. Another sister, Elizabeth, was as deeply interested in education as Robert Forster. She lived to see her nephew carry the Education Act through Parliament. Her first practical effort for the education of the poor was in connection with a little elementary school at Tottenham. When William Edward Forster became Vice-President of the Council, his aunt was wont to consult him as to the needs of this school, and he entered fully into all her inquiries and difficulties, as is shown by a letter of his written from the Privy Council Office to her in 1870. "I am glad," he wrote, "the inspector's report is not against the teacher or the teaching, but merely against the school buildings and fittings. I suppose the school is the same as that in which I was caught with thee in a snowstorm in May some forty years ago, or its successor ; in remembrance of which, thou must let me enable the school to be improved, so as to meet the present requirements, so please draw upon me for any sum up to twenty pounds thou mayst want for that purpose."

Mary Forster, the eldest of the sisters, followed in the footsteps of Elizabeth Fry, her chosen work being visiting prisons and seeking to redeem those who had fallen into vice and misery. The remaining sister, who survived all the others,

and only died in 1880, was Sarah Forster, one of the ministers of the Society of Friends. Although Forster's grandfather had ten children, none left any issue but William Forster; so that, after the death of Miss Sarah Forster, in 1880, William Edward Forster was the sole survivor of the family. "I am the last of my name," he would sometimes say rather sadly. In the course of this narrative the reader has seen how close was the intercourse between Forster and his mother's relatives. It was not more close, however, than that which united him to the honoured family of philanthropic workers at Tottenham. Down to the death of his aunt in 1880, he constantly visited the ancestral home, and nothing seemed to afford him more pleasure than to be able to do anything to add to the comfort or to further the wishes of those with whose interests in life he had so close a sympathy and for whom he cherished so deep an affection.

A year after his father's death his mother died. Writing from her bedside to Miss Gurney, he says, "My beloved mother must soon be at peace. I feel very much for thee in being away; but nothing could be done if thou wast nearer. Yesterday afternoon, she said, 'Dearest Cousin Anna, she is inexpressibly dear to me. The Lord be with her.'" A few hours later, the letter concludes, "All is over, dearest Cousin Anna. At half-past four, she departed peacefully in my arms." Now the last link that bound him to the home of his youth was broken.

It was about the time of his mother's death that another heavy blow fell upon him, in the loss of his old friend Barclay Fox. "I have lost the dearest, the truest, the most loving of friends," he writes—"such a friend as no man could expect twice in his life." It was well for Forster at that time that he had a home of his own, and that he was no longer entirely dependent upon the friendships of his youth. His marriage had made him one of a large family, and he thoroughly enjoyed a position which to him was an entirely novel one.

"To-day," he says, writing to Mr. Ellis Yarnall on January 1st, 1854, "is the break-up of a large family party. We have been ten brothers and sisters this last week under our mother Mrs. Arnold's roof; and most pleasant and refreshing it is to me to find myself—only son as I am—the member of so large and united a family, every member of which it is most pleasant for me to be with."

The great public events of the decade were the Crimean war, the agitation in the United States which preceded the great rebellion, and the movement in this country in favour of

a national system of education. So far as the war with Russia was concerned, Forster's interest in it was that of the ordinary Englishman loving freedom and devoted to his country. He regarded the war as entirely righteous, and believed that it was to be the lot of England to break down the autocratic system in Russia, and in doing so to give freedom both to the Poles and to the many subjugated races which had been brought under the rule of the czars. His attitude upon this question is interesting and important, because it shows how far he had diverged from the principles of the religious body of which he was by birth a member. He had absolutely abandoned the tenets of the Society of Friends on the subject of war. Feeling all its horrors and evils as keenly as any man could do, he nevertheless believed that there was something worse than a war in a righteous cause. Accordingly, while so many members of the Society of Friends were doing their utmost to bring the struggle in the Crimea to a close at the earliest possible moment, without regard to the objects for which it had been undertaken, Mr. Forster was chiefly anxious that it should be waged with thoroughness and pertinacity until those ends had been achieved. Like the majority of his fellow-countrymen, he was disgusted by the unpreparedness, the vacillation, and the weakness displayed by our ministers in carrying on the struggle; but he had the fairness to refrain from joining in the clamour against particular ministers, and to point out to his fellow-countrymen, in letters to the newspapers, that what was wanted was not change of ministers so much as a change of the system of administration. He was, of course, like all men who held his views, disappointed by the manner in which the war came to a close, feeling that great European interests had been sacrificed to the exigencies of parties at home and the interests of our French ally. But this feeling of disappointment at the failure of England to accomplish her ends did not interfere with the satisfaction with which he saw an end put to the slaughter in the Crimea.

After the conclusion of peace, he presided over a banquet given to the workpeople at Burley in celebration of the event, and one of the characteristic features of this special entertainment was his demand for "three cheers for the Russians." To fight an opponent with all his might so long as the contest continued, and when it was over to treat him with magnanimity was one of the rules of his life.

But it was not in the question of our struggle with Russia that his interest was most deeply engaged during this period.

Even at the height of that struggle his thoughts were turned rather to the West than to the East. The labours of his father in America, his own intense interest in the agitation against slavery, and the fact that he had already formed many friendships with Americans, gave him a somewhat peculiar position among English politicians of his time, so far as affairs on the other side of the Atlantic were concerned. The people of the United States were then approaching the great crisis in their national history. Comparatively few Englishmen had any idea of what was passing beneath the surface in that country; but Forster was a keen and close and constant observer of events in North America. It was doubtless to the sympathetic interest with which he watched a political struggle upon which most Englishmen were apt at that time to look down with a certain feeling of disdain, that he owed the accuracy with which, at a later period, he was able to forecast the course of events and to lead the opinions of his fellow-countrymen to right conclusions on the question of the civil war. He was, between 1850 and 1860, in constant correspondence with an American gentleman, Mr. Ellis Yarnall, and his letters to him show how strongly his feeling was interested on the subject of American policy. Writing to Mr. Yarnall, July 16th, 1856, he says, "Your domestic politics are just now intensely interesting. The pro-slavery fanatics are the best of abolitionists, and I cannot express my admiration of their conduct. This Sumner outrage, and the Kansas atrocities, have actually made an anti-slavery president a possibility, which neither you nor I could, a year ago, have imagined. If ever there was a clear course for a patriot it lies before him now in the United States. The honour, the liberty, the very existence of your commonwealth is at stake, to be saved if the prudent men are brave, but otherwise to be lost. I am not very sanguine about your public men, but I confess I like the look of Fremont. His being a Southerner is an advantage. Will he be a Southern Peel?"

On October 2nd he says to the same correspondent, "It gave me the greatest possible pleasure and comfort to hear of your being so entirely in your right place, doing your right work. And what work it is!—saving your country from sin and its punishment. I feel for and with you intensely; so much so, that my hand shakes when I open an American paper. But yet I almost envy you. It seems to me never was the duty of a citizen more plain than just now it is to Americans. I can imagine all sorts of difficulties felt by good men with regard to abolition of slavery, the how and the

when ; but as to the extension of slavery a child may see what is to be done, and they must be heroes who do it." This of course had reference to the Kansas question, which was one of the immediate causes of the attempt of the South to secede. He continues : "If you can send it, I should be very glad of a copy of the Kansas Nebraska Bill as passed by Douglas ; but remember this, do not stay for one moment from your work to gratify what, alas ! with me, is little better than curiosity, for I wish I could help you, but know not how.

"You know of course of Kingsley, the author of 'Hypatia,' 'Westward Ho !' etc. He used, I think, to be anything but an Abolitionist ; but I cannot resist sending you an abstract from late notes of his to me. 'I want to talk over a hundred things with you : *inter alia* the fact of the day—the Kansas slave quarrel. This is the first growl of thunder, but the storm has not come yet. Compromise—with the expectation of which all respectable, elegant, diplomatic persons are pooh-poohing the whole thing, "Oh, of course it will be compromised!"—is in my eye utterly unlikely so far as facts look just now. What is more, perhaps God does not intend it to be compromised. Perhaps He does not intend men to go on any longer with the example of the French Revolution staring them in the face, denying that the God who ruled the Jewish world rules ours, and denying (all the while being abjectly afraid of it) that demoniac element in man which is the very fire of God. We shall see, both in Europe and America, whether the bed is not too short for a man to lie on, and the cloak too small to wrap himself in, and whether the daubing of mistempered mortar will keep the old wall up after all. On high authority, I rather expect that it will not.'"

His close study of American affairs, and his intense sympathy with the Party of Freedom, made him anxious to do what he could to enlighten his fellow-countrymen as to the merits of the impending struggle, and by speaking and lecturing in Bradford and throughout the West Riding, he did much between 1856 and 1861 to cultivate among his neighbours sound sentiments with regard to parties in America.

While he was thus doing what he could to enlist the sympathies of his fellow-countrymen on the side of the North in the American struggle, he was at the same time giving his ardent support to those English Liberals who were now raising a demand for a new Reform Bill. He had himself, as has already been told, been in favour of universal suffrage during the crisis of 1848 and the movement of the Chartists. His opinions had now undergone some modification, but he was

still one of the most pronounced advocates of a radical scheme of parliamentary reform. He had admired Lord Palmerston's conduct at the time of the Crimean war, and had cordially supported his policy with reference to foreign affairs; but he entertained a rooted mistrust of the Liberalism which the veteran statesman professed. He saw that no real reform of the electoral system could be expected from him, and he joined those who were inveighing against the paralyzing influence which Palmerston seemed able to exercise over the domestic politics of England.

It was as a Radical reformer, in favour of a sweeping extension of the suffrage, that Forster first came forward as a candidate for Parliament. It has already been told how the working men of Bradford looked to him as their destined political leader, but it was not at Bradford that he made his first attempt to obtain a seat in the House of Commons. When the general election of 1857 took place, and the Radical party throughout England entered into a struggle for power with the Palmerstonian Liberals and Whigs, Mr. Forster's name was mentioned in connection with several important constituencies in the north of England. One of these was Newcastle-on-Tyne. The working-men and advanced Radicals of that borough, under the leadership of Mr. Joseph Cowen, Junior, were looking about for some one to represent their cause in the election. Mr. Forster's reputation as an advanced politician, a thoughtful writer, and a warm friend of the masses, had reached their ears, and he was invited to Newcastle to confer with them. It is probable that he would have become the Radical candidate, if the Dissenters had not preferred a gentleman whose views upon the question of education were more in harmony with their own. At Huddersfield, and at York also, there were considerable parties who desired to secure him as their candidate; but it was at Leeds that he actually came forward as an aspirant to parliamentary honours.

The Radicals of that town knew him well, for at Burley he was almost as close a neighbour of theirs as of the people of Bradford. He had often spoken and lectured in Leeds, had written many letters to the *Leeds Mercury*, and had engaged in more than one lively passage at arms with Mr. Edward Baines upon the merits of a national system of education, carried out under the auspices of the State, as opposed to those of the purely voluntary system favoured by Mr. Baines. Both on the subject of parliamentary reform and of education, Mr. Forster's views were identical with those held by the Radicals of Leeds, and they were eager to secure him as their

representative. He was proposed and carried at a large public meeting in the town. But another gentleman who was proposed at the same meeting as a Liberal candidate and not carried, announced his determination to go to the poll. Mr. Baines had also been proposed for Leeds, and there was an almost unanimous feeling in his favour. Mr. Forster found that by persisting in his candidature, he might imperil the success of Mr. Baines, and he accordingly withdrew from the contest, which resulted in the return of Mr. Baines, and of a Conservative, Mr. Robert Hall.

To MR. M. J. LUDLOW.

“Burley, near Otley, April 5th, 1857.

“MY DEAR LUDLOW,

“Most hearty thanks for your notes. Nothing is more flat than stale electioneering, so I will make no allusion thereto—I suppose it will all come on again in due time—save, first, Lord Goderich certainly made a first-rate speech at his election for the Riding, and, next, what an inconsistency man is generally, and I especially. For years I have been raging and grumbling against the Manchester school, and yet could I have worked for either Cobden or Bright I should have done so with all my might. After all, they are men, and mean what they do, and that is something in these times, and I suppose in most times. How much parliamentary reform would you give? I should like to pick your brains thereanent. I fancy I could steal some notions which would be a credit to me. A Reform Bill there must be plainly; so it may be well to discuss what.

“Yours ever,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Two months later, in May, 1857, Mr. Hall unexpectedly died, and Mr. Forster was again invited by a large meeting of the electors to come forward as a candidate. He issued an address, in which he declared himself to be in favour of a real measure of reform, “a measure giving to numbers and to intelligence more of their due share of the franchise, securing its free exercise by all; making the length of a man’s purse no longer a test of his fitness to be a legislator, and allotting with less injustice to the different constituencies their share in the representation.” In other respects his political creed was that of advanced Liberalism, perfect impartiality towards religious sects, the abolition of church rates, the adoption of

a national system of education, and non-intervention in foreign affairs being among the points contained in his address. Once again, however, local jealousies, and above all, the antagonism of the Leeds Nonconformists and of their distinguished leader Mr. Baines to Mr. Forster's views upon the education question, proved fatal to his chance of success. Mr. Remington Mills, who had been defeated at the previous election, was again adopted by the more moderate section of the party, whilst Mr. Forster was once more asked to come forward by the Radicals. Rather than cause a division in the presence of a common foe, however, Mr. Forster again retired.

This election had the effect of giving him a very prominent position as one of the leaders of the party in favour of a national system of education. After the election (June 29th, 1857), he was entertained at a banquet at Leeds by his political friends. In the course of his speech he made a vigorous attack upon the voluntaryists, as they were then called, showing how complete had been the failure of the voluntary system to meet the educational wants of the people of England. Strong as had been his feeling previously in favour of a national system of education, it became much stronger after his experiences in Leeds at this election in 1857.

It cannot be doubted that these disappointments—and others of the same nature which were in store for him—were very trying to a man of Forster's ardent temperament. It was shortly before his experiences at Leeds that he had written as follows to his wife:—

“ July 11th, 1856.

“ This birthday makes me think much; there have been so many of them before, and I have done so little. The world is so little, if at all, better for my tarriance in it. Would that the future may be different from the past. It ought to be, seeing what a helper I have in thee. But oh! that I may from this day forth work harder, with more singleness, both of aim and motive, with less self-seeking, with more self-denial, nay, rather with less self-indulgence, for what right have I to talk of self-denial? and then perhaps I may find what is laid upon me to do, and in measure to do it. At present I seem to myself very much to fritter away both time and brain, even when I do not waste them. . . . Well, I wonder what the near future has in store for us. It is hard to think; but it is time I was doing more.”

If there are any traces of depression and disappointment in this letter, he gave no outward sign of such feelings, but

returned with manly vigour and cheerfulness to his daily work. It was only natural that, as the man who had been twice chosen by the Radicals of Leeds as a fitting representative of their section of the party, Mr. Forster should now have almost as close a connection with that borough as with Bradford. Accordingly, during the next two years, we find him delivering many lectures and addressing many meetings at Leeds. But he did not neglect the duty he owed to Bradford, and there also he took a leading part in promoting the reform agitation which was then in progress, and in assisting in the general public work of the borough.

In April, 1859, it seemed as though at last the opportunity for which he longed so earnestly had come. Parliament was dissolved, and Mr. Forster was invited to come forward by the united Liberal party of Leeds as joint candidate with Mr. Baines (now Sir Edward Baines) for the representation of the borough. Although there were some points of difference between the two candidates, it was to the credit of both that they worked together with perfect cordiality and good faith, Mr. Baines being accepted as the representative of the more moderate, and Mr. Forster as that of the more advanced section of the party.

A vigorous battle was fought, in the course of which Forster gave signs of growing power as a politician. The hopes of himself and of his friends ran high, and there seemed to be every prospect that Leeds was to secure the honour of being represented by the future author of the Education Act. But there were some timid souls among the electors who had been affrighted by Mr. Forster's reputation as an advanced thinker and ardent Radical, and when the poll was declared, it was found that whilst Mr. Baines was at the head with 2343 votes, Mr. Beecroft, the Conservative candidate, came next to him with 2302, Mr. Forster being 22 votes behind that gentleman. Thus, by a narrow majority, Leeds deprived itself of a representative of whom it might well have been proud. It is bare justice to the Liberal party in that great borough to say that they viewed the result of the election with profound distress. Mr. Forster's connection with the town had been a close one for several years, and he had made himself the idol not merely of the working classes but of all those Liberals who were not bound by the trammels of Whiggism. The better he was known to the electors, the more keenly were his great qualities appreciated, and his defeat at the poll by 22 votes was the cause of real sorrow to them. Mr. Baines, in returning thanks for his own election, declared that the

uppermost feeling in his mind was not one of joy, but of sorrow. "I deeply grieve," he said, "that I have not for my colleague that accomplished man whom you gave as my fellow-candidate, a man so sagacious and ardent as a reformer, so excellent in all the relations of life, so vast in his stores of knowledge, so honourable in his conduct before you, that he would have adorned the representation of this great constituency. We have done everything together," he continued, "and my estimation of my friend, now that the battle is over, is greater than it was before."

It was in the midst of this exciting contest that his thoughts were diverted by a very heavy blow which fell upon him within the family circle. This was the death of his wife's brother, Mr. William Delafield Arnold, at Gibraltar, whilst on his way home from India, where he had occupied an important post in the Civil Service. In William Delafield Arnold, Forster, as has already been told, had found a congenial spirit, and though their opportunities of personal intercourse had been restricted by the absence of Mr. Arnold in India, they had maintained a constant correspondence, and had entertained for each other the warmest feelings of affection. "He was indeed a man after my own heart," writes Forster to his wife, immediately after receiving news of his death, "in some respects, and those very important ones, my ideal of a man; such unconquerable energy, such unflinching readiness, above all, such a high, and brave, and noble spirit; such a true and tender heart, and such a soul of honour, like an ancient knight, with a woman's sensitiveness. And then to think of his career, which looked as though it would be grand and useful; ended when it was but ready to begin. And then he loved me so much—but I am thinking of myself, and not of thee. The precious children! I do feel as much like a father as man can. May I be helped, so that if he can look down upon them, he may not feel that his trust in me has been misplaced."

These words were written whilst the election for Leeds was still undecided. "I can hardly bear," he says, in conclusion, "to turn to this evening's work. It reminds me so that one of my greatest pleasures in anticipation was the joy which he would feel in my success. Success is doubtful enough, but that does not matter much."

Immediately after his defeat at Leeds, Mr. Forster set off to meet the four orphan children of his brother-in-law on their arrival in England, and from that time to the day of his death he stood towards them in the place of the father whom they had lost. "In the spring of 1859," says Mrs. Forster, "a great

change came to our home life, by our adopting the four orphan children of my brother, William Delafield Arnold. He was the fourth son of Dr. Arnold, and, after being educated at Rugby and Oxford, he received a cadetship in the Indian army, and went out to India from Oxford at the age of twenty. In 1850, he married Frances Anne Hodgson, a daughter of General Hodgson, of the Indian Army. They were married from the house of Lord Lawrence, then Sir John Lawrence. My brother's health broke down, and in 1853 he had to come home on sick leave, and remained at home for two years. When he returned to India, he was appointed Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and had the difficult and honourable task of first organizing education in that province. He was engaged in this work when the mutiny broke out. His home was at that time at Dhurmsala, and there his youngest child was born in August, 1857.

"Mrs. W. Arnold's health had been failing for some months, and in March, 1858, she died, before her husband, who had been summoned back from a distant inspecting tour, could reach her. It was settled that the four children should come home to us, and their father sent them home round the Cape, following himself by the overland route, and intending to meet his little ones in England, and bring them first to Fox How, and then to us. But his own health had received a severe shock in all the anxieties and sorrow of the past year. The doctors had hoped benefit from the voyage; but he became worse, and was taken so ill at Cairo that he had to be left behind. After three weeks, he struggled on to Gibraltar, where he was landed in a dying state, and there he died on the following day at the early age of thirty-one. In my brother Matthew Arnold's poems there is one called a 'Southern Night,' which refers beautifully and touchingly to the early deaths of William Arnold and his wife.

"There was a great charm and great nobility in my brother 'Willy's' character, combined with remarkable energy and ardour, and something of youthful vehemence. He was a younger man than my husband by several years; but their characters had much in common, and they were interested in each other from the first. My husband's warm affection for him is shown in several of his letters. 'In honour of William Arnold's memory a medal was struck, three of which, in gold and silver, were to be given every year to the ripest scholars in the schools which he founded in the Punjab. The medal bears on the obverse his likeness in relief exquisitely carved, and conveying the precise impression which so fascinated his

friends—a kind of sweet stateliness in accord with the whole tone of his mind; the reverse bears the simple inscription, “In memory of W. D. Arnold, first Director of the Department, 1855.” His friend, Mr. Meredith Townsend, after thus describing the memorial in a letter to the papers, concludes with this tribute to my brother,—‘William Arnold did not live long enough to gain his true place in this world; but he had time enough given him to make himself of importance to a Government like that of Lord Dalhousie, to mould the education of a great province, and to win the enduring love of all with whom he ever came in contact.’”

The year 1859 was memorable as that which witnessed the first of the great continental wars of the middle of the present century. When it was known that the French emperor, not satisfied with having effected the liberation of Italy, intended to recompense himself for his sacrifice by the annexation of Savoy, there was a mighty outburst of public indignation in this country, and for a time feeling ran so high, that war between us and our Crimean ally appeared to be not improbable.

Mr. Forster felt as strongly as any one the selfishness of the policy of France, but he was one of those who through this national crisis stood most firmly on the side of non-intervention. A great meeting in favour of peace was held in Bradford. He attended it, and delivered a speech in favour of non-intervention; but the most characteristic incident connected with his appearance at this meeting was not his speech. The great Hungarian patriot, Kossuth, had been invited to attend. Forster himself had taken a prominent part years before in welcoming Kossuth to the shores of England, and the feeling of enthusiasm with which he regarded that illustrious man was fully shared by the people of Bradford. The peace meeting was crammed by an eager crowd, anxious to listen to Kossuth's words. But to their grievous disappointment, the Hungarian patriot did not make his appearance. The truth was that Mr. Forster, feeling that the effect of the meeting would be weakened if it were not made exclusively English and local, induced Kossuth to stay away, taking upon himself the full responsibility for having done so. In after-years he was wont to say that this “bottling-up” of the Hungarian patriot was the boldest thing he had ever done. There can be no doubt that, however prudent the step might be, it was one which exposed him to the risk of some unpopularity among his Liberal fellow-townsmen. Fortunately the people of Bradford, though they were disappointed at the non-appearance of Kossuth, appreciated the reasons for Mr. Forster's action; and

he did not suffer, as might have been expected, from what he had done.

As all the world knows, we escaped from the threatened war with France; but, following upon this strained state of our relations with that country, came the volunteer movement in England. Forster threw himself into it with enthusiasm. It was difficult indeed to recognize in the captain of volunteers, who was eager above all things to perfect himself in his drill, who spent hours on the moors practising at the target, and who played the part of an indefatigable recruiting sergeant both at Bradford and at Burley, the son of the old Quaker preacher, whose whole life had been given to the promulgation of the doctrine of passive resistance. But the Quaker preacher's son had convinced himself that there were worse things in the world than war; and now, when it was proposed that English citizens should arm themselves, not for purposes of aggression, but in order that they might be prepared to resist a possible invasion, he was one of the foremost in carrying on the work. "I too," he says, December 2nd, 1859, writing to his friend, Mr. Thomas Hughes, "am volunteering: *mirabile dictu*. I am calling our mill people together this evening, and hope to raise from them a sub-division. I am anxious about this, because I think, if it takes, it may be followed in many other mills, and this would not only lead to a large increase of volunteers, but would do great indirect good by bringing masters and men together, giving them good-fellowship and *esprit de corps*, giving the young factory men capital training and exercise, and, most important of all, enlisting the working-men, and thereby not only making them patriotic, but preventing the middle classes being confoundedly conservative, which we shall be, if we are armed, and the operatives are not. However, we have two rocks in the way. One is the feeling hereabouts in favour of a genteel corps, which I dare say will be neat enough, but a mere plaything—for instance, one hundred men at Leeds for its two hundred thousand—and next, my total and ludicrous ignorance. To make the men take to it, I shall have to be one of their awkward squad myself; and awkward enough I shall be, for I never could keep step with any one, and never handled a gun in my life."

It will not be necessary to pursue in detail the history of Mr. Forster's connection with the volunteer force. As he himself said, in the lines just quoted, he began in absolute ignorance of everything appertaining to volunteering. Amusing stories are told of his ignorance of the way in which a man ought to handle a gun; and no one who had known him up

to that point in his life, believed that it would ever be possible for him to make a creditable figure in a march past. There were besides many among his older friends who looked somewhat askance at the zeal which the son of the old Quaker minister was showing in a movement of a decidedly military character. But Forster's energy overcame every difficulty. He set himself to learn with thoroughness the duties of a citizen soldier, and he, who had never up to that moment fired a gun, not only made himself proficient in his drill, but became a very fair shot, as was proved in subsequent years, when he was more than once selected to shoot in the Lords and Commons match at Wimbledon. The ardour of his devotion to his duties as a volunteer was the distinguishing feature of his life during the year 1860; and though his parliamentary career necessarily prevented his following a military life as closely as he could have desired, he never lost his interest in the volunteer force, but continued both as a citizen and a politician to afford it all the support in his power, whether he was dealing with his own corps at Burley, or with the volunteer army as a whole.

In December, 1860, he went to Hythe, to pass a course of instruction in musketry, not it might have been supposed, a very pleasing or easy task for a man of his years and training. Yet the following extracts from his letters at the time show the spirit in which he did that which he believed to be his duty.

“Hythe, December 4th, 1860.

“. . . Well, here I am at school, sure enough, and what is more, feeling somewhat of a new boy. But to my journal. I was hard run all yesterday. I only just got in time to Apperley, and at 3.30 I went to a large and rather important committee meeting of persons wishing to ask Gladstone and Cobden to a Bradford banquet, at which, being in the chair, I was only just able to leave so as to catch the Great Northern as it was starting. Rain all the way. This morning, too, they called me too late at the Great Northern Hotel. I only just caught the Dover train. Rain again—a pity, as the drive from Folkestone Junction to Hythe, through Sandgate, close under the cliff, was very pretty. I drove straight to the Swan, and immediately went in search of lodgings; and I think I have housed myself very comfortably. . . . I then went to report myself at the barracks. There were about twenty members of the class there, the rest not turning up till evening; for I hear eighty-nine are expected. We were formed into two

squads, and put through the platoon several times, in which I cannot say I was brilliant; but I shall do it much better next time. I cannot say I like the American news. What I fear most is not disunion, but some compromise of the North to the South to keep them."

"Post Office, Hythe, December 5th, 1860.

"... I fear I have not time to-day to do more than merely say I have got through my first day's schooling, and schooling it is, to an absurd exactness! After getting classed this morning into sections (by-the-by, to my horror I am right hand of my section), we were marched upstairs into the schoolroom, with a narrow bench, a desk before us, no room for our legs or rifles, and there we had to learn the parts of a lock, etc. Our work was a hard physical and mental grind, and if both my memory and my left arm be not strengthened by the time I get back it is a pity! I find I know absolutely nothing, and am therefore a complete muff; but I think I get better hourly. A young Melly from Liverpool has introduced himself to me. . . . The weather is, for the time of year, good; feet deep in slush, and heavy showers occasionally, but on the whole, fine overhead, and not cold."

"Hythe, December 6th, 1860.

"... Last evening we had a large *table-d'hôte* at the Swan; discovered we had no colonel, or major, or lord, so appointed as our chairman Captain Macgregor, acting Adjutant of the Highland London Scottish, and had a long debate on prizes. . . . It is very much the largest volunteer class there has been. I think the majority are captains, and I should say the average age is full thirty-five; not a few quite young men, but some bald and grey-headed ancients. . . . I told you that this morning we were classified; our section has the northern men, a jolly captain from Harrogate; a jollier—in fact, an enormous—captain from Whitehaven; Ensign Robinson, from Skipton, etc."

"Hythe, December 14th, 1860.

"Fate has been unkind to me to-day. If I can get into the first class to-morrow, I shall not despair of being a marksman. The highest score to-day was eleven, and the excitement is intense, everybody asking everybody what he has made, careless whether he knows him or not. . . . Is it not absurd, being so interested? but I defy any one to avoid it."

“Hythe, December 16th, 1860.

“This has been a comparatively quiet day. In the morning I went to church—a fine old church—and though not yet a first-class man, I had the honour of sitting in the position of Alderman of Hythe. Since lunch I have been to the camp at Shorncliffe, and a dreary-looking place it is, and returned by Sandgate and the beach. It is a mild, muggy day, but if tomorrow is like it, it will not be bad for shooting. . . . Our volunteer parson read prayers this morning, and a very nice fellow he seems to be. He was a Crimean chaplain.”

“Hythe, December 17th, 1860.

“. . . Certainly the mixture of men here is striking and amusing enough. I wish I had the power to draw them, with either pencil or pen. First, our chairman—if not the Macgregor, he is of close kin to him, upright as an arrow, close on six feet. With his eagle feather and in his kilt he looks the soldier. He is a leading low churchman they say, a gentlemanly fellow, and apt with his tongue, and with a good deal of dry humour and much talent for caricature—good-humoured but clever caricatures. No. 2. Lieutenant—three inches taller than me, in a magnificent red coat, and with a moustache with the true military twirl; very gentlemanly, but somewhat pompous—his whole soul absorbed in the movement. No. 3. Lieutenant—a fat sallow face, deep in hair, looking half soft till you see the Irish twinkle in his eye. No. 4, a wild, fierce scapegrace, amusing, but almost too coarse to be bearable. Then we have impudent young shopkeepers from London, still more impudent barristers—not bad fellows, though; I play whist with them,—young fellows just from college, old travellers, respectable country gentlemen, and a few old soldiers,—all on terms of perfect equality. Chaff abounds, as you may imagine. It is an amusing experience, and I am not sorry to have had it, but I do not wish to renew it. Not the least noteworthy are three Dumfries farmers, who mess together, one of them, especially, a magnificent fellow—fifty years ago he would have been a Dandy Dinmont; six feet two, weighing fifteen stone, straight as a pin, an owner I find to-day of six thousand sheep. Well, I must go and secure seats of honour at the mess, as I have asked one of the officers to dine with me, so with dear love to you all,

“Thine,
“W. E. F.”

CHAPTER IX.

ELECTION FOR BRADFORD.

IN the month of February, 1861, Mr. Forster's lifelong desire to obtain a seat in the House of Commons was at last gratified. After much trouble and disappointment, this coveted triumph was attained with ease. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Titus Salt, the sitting member for Bradford, retired from the representation on the ground of ill health, and there was an almost immediate demand, on the part of the electors, that Mr. Forster should become his successor. Some difficulties, however, stood in the way. It will be remembered that at the last election for Leeds Mr. Forster had been one of the joint candidates of the united Liberal party. He had, however, created some distrust among the more moderate members of that party by the warmth with which he advocated a sweeping measure of parliamentary reform. A week or two before Mr. Salt's resignation, a meeting was held in Leeds for the purpose of establishing a Radical Reform Association. Mr. Forster was warned by many of the most influential Liberals in Leeds that he would seriously imperil his chances of success if he were to take any part in connection with the formation of this association. But the principles of the association were those to which he himself held strongly, and he was not to be deterred from giving them his support by any fear of the results. Accordingly, he went to Leeds and delivered a strong Radical speech on the necessity for a great enlargement of the franchise. Within a few days Mr. Salt's resignation occurred. The Bradford electors were, on the whole, more inclined towards Radicalism than those of Leeds, yet some of them viewed with disfavour the pronounced action of Mr. Forster, and when his name was submitted to a public meeting of the electors, they brought forward, in opposition to him, another local man, Mr. Priestman. There was another section of the Bradford electorate which regarded Mr. Forster with suspicion, though

on very different grounds. The fact that he had ceased to belong to the Society of Friends was urged against him by those who might be called the political Dissenters of the borough. These gentlemen were anxious to secure Mr. Edward Miall as their representative. It is curious to note that in the speech of Mr. Miall's proposer at the public meeting at which the question of the Liberal candidature was to be settled, one of the charges brought against Mr. Forster was that he was no longer a man of peace, inasmuch as he was known for his zeal as a captain of volunteers. But though there were thus some who were disposed to make occasions for fault finding, if they could not find them ready made, the overwhelming majority of the Liberal party in Bradford was enthusiastic in Mr. Forster's support. The *Bradford Observer*, February 7th, 1861, referring to the situation, said: "Mr. William Edward Forster would be an honour to our constituency. We do not know the question he has not studied, especially within the range of politics, in the best and broadest sense of the term; and we do not know the question on which reading and meditation have not led him to sound and just conclusions. It is well to have a member who votes right, but it is better to have one with the qualities of a statesman. Those who know Mr. Forster best, and who are best able to judge in these matters, know that he has the qualities of a statesman in no ordinary degree. Strong natural powers, well cultivated, facility and elegance of expression, high moral principle, and strong sympathy with the masses of the people."

These utterances of opinion, on the part of the leading newspaper in Bradford, expressed the general sentiments of the constituency. Mr. Forster was selected by an overwhelming majority of the Liberal electors as their representative; the Tories felt themselves powerless to prevent the return of so strong a candidate, and accordingly on Monday, February 11th, he was elected without opposition.

The following day he went to London, and with characteristic eagerness drove straight to the House of Commons, but found that he was too late to take his seat that night. The next afternoon he was introduced by Mr. Wickham and Mr. Baines, and took his place below the gangway, on the Ministerial side.

The gratification of that which had been the ambition of a lifetime was, it need hardly be said, a matter of unfeigned rejoicing to Mr. Forster. No man of his time had been more anxious to win a place in Parliament, and none had more zealously and steadily sought to prepare himself for the duties

of a representative. There had been many periods in his career, up to this point, when it had seemed to him that the struggle was in vain, and that inexorable circumstances must for ever bar his way to a parliamentary career. With what courage and perseverance he fought against these doubts, as well as against the substantial difficulties which he had to encounter, only those who were acquainted with his inner life can know. Now that the goal of his ambition had been reached, he threw himself into his new life with something of the enthusiasm of a boy. No one attended the House more regularly, no one listened more attentively to the speeches—often dull enough, as he admits in his diary—no one was more zealous in discharging those smaller duties which attach to the life of a Member of Parliament, such as attendance with deputations, and committee work outside the House. During this first session of Parliament, he took a house in Guilford Street, Russell Square. His first appearance as a speaker was on February 22nd, when he asked a question referring to the clearance of vessels in South Carolina. He records the incident as follows:—

“After breakfast at hotel, wrote out short speech for my question, about which very anxious, because of touching on slave trade. Went with Indian deputation to Lord Palmerston’s at Cambridge House at two. Said a few words. Deputation large. To House. Took seat at prayers—two off Bright’s seat, but he not there, so spoke from his seat. Had to catch Speaker’s eye, which was awkward, but arranged with him when I was to get up, which I did at 6.30, Milnes and another rising at the same time, but there were cries for Forster. The House was not full, nor yet thin: had been inattentive, but was tolerant of a new member, and therefore attentive, and cheered me when I sat down, which I did in a few minutes, having said my say. I was civilly spoken to by several afterwards, but was greatly relieved by Lord John’s reply, who promised me my correspondence, and said the consul had not acknowledged the new Government, thereby proving that my question had done good rather than harm. Dined afterwards at House. Milnes, who made a good speech on Wife’s Sisters Marriage Bill, told me I pronounced lamentable lamentable. He introduced me to old Pam at tea, who was gracious.”

The year 1861 was memorable in the history of the world as having witnessed the outbreak of the great rebellion in the United States. There were not many incidents in Parliament during that year, however, to show that the English public

appreciated the gravity of the situation and the magnitude of the issues involved in the conflict. Mr. Forster's question, which bore upon the possible recognition of the Secessionist Government by English officials in America, was one of the first occasions upon which Parliamentary notice was taken of what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic. It is characteristic of his strong feeling on this question, that within a few days of his election he should thus publicly have identified himself with the friends of the North.

Soon afterwards he took another and still more important step in moving an amendment to a resolution of which Mr. Gregory gave notice in favour of a recognition of the Southern Confederacy.

To ELLIS YARNALL.

"May 10th, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I can only send a hurried line, but I cannot be longer without saying how intensely interested I am in this crisis of your country, and how much I, I may say we, sympathize with you in what must be your feeling. Terrible, however, as is civil war, I cannot say but I greatly rejoice in the outburst of patriotism throughout the North. I am doing what in me lies to help it here.

"A Mr. Gregory, M.P. for Galway, who lately travelled in the South, and who has returned well humbugged by the Southerners, insists upon proposing to the House the absurd but mischievous notion that we should promptly recognize Jefferson Davis's Confederacy. I have met his notice of motion with corresponding counter-notice, and expected the debate to come off a week or two ago; but at the pressing solicitation of the Government he put it off. Most men of influence in Parliament wish him not to persist in bringing it forward, but he talks of doing so this day week, so I send you a *Times*, with the terms of my counter-notice. I wish it had fallen into the hands of a member of more experience to stand up for the North and the Union; but I must do what I can.

"I am in constant communication with Mr. Motley and Colonel Fremont, and the new American Consul just arrived, and several other intelligent Americans. I cannot say how glad I am of the news in yesterday, which I think makes Washington safe.

"I fear I cannot write more now; please direct to us, 74, Guilford Street, Russell Square, London, where we are for the

session with our adopted children. My wife joins me in kindest regards to Mrs. Yarnall and yourself.

"I asked rather an important question in the House yesterday about letters of marque, and elicited from our Under-Secretary that he would issue a proclamation against British subjects engaging in that or in any way in your quarrels.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"W. E. FORSTER."

It was, however, rather with the question of parliamentary reform, at that time revolving round the fate of Mr. Baines's Borough Franchise Bill, than with the destinies of the great republic, that the House of Commons was interested. Forster believed in the sincerity of the professions made by Lord John Russell on the reform question, but he had no belief that any reform bill could be carried whilst Lord Palmerston remained at the head of the Government. As has already been said, he had admired Lord Palmerston's foreign policy greatly, and in his diary he alludes regretfully to the fact that he had felt himself compelled to vote against him on the question of the "hocussed" Afghanistan papers, adding, that the facts were too strong to allow him to do otherwise. But although with his strong sense of the imperial position and destinies of England he was constrained to admire the high-spirited patriotism which characterized Lord Palmerston's management of our foreign affairs, he entertained the most profound distrust of his policy in domestic matters, and it is certain that nothing would have induced him to serve in a ministry of which Palmerston was the chief.

If the House took little notice of what was happening in the United States, Mr. Forster himself was by no means so indifferent. Throughout the session he kept a watchful eye upon those members who were anxious to force the recognition of the South upon us, and he records with some satisfaction, in his diary, how he was called to order from the chair for the eagerness with which he opposed the attempt of Mr. Gregory to plead the cause of the Confederacy on the floor of the House of Commons. His speech on this question attracted not a little notice in the press, and as a parliamentary "first appearance" was an unequivocal success. Men recognized his earnestness, and perceived that he had not merely a special interest in, but special knowledge of, American affairs. He thus came to be identified in Parliament with the Northern side in the great struggle. It was natural, in these circum-

stances, that Mr. Adams, the American minister, and other distinguished Northerners, should have sought his acquaintanceship, and in his social as well as in his political life he found himself, during this session of 1861, in close alliance with the representatives of the North in this country.

During a brief holiday in Switzerland, after the work of the session, he received news of the outbreak of hostilities between the North and the South. "While at dinner," he says, writing to his wife, "came in thy dear letter of Monday, giving me the first news of the American battle, the telegram and leader on which I have since read in the *Times*. It is a terrible business; but in my inmost heart, though I would not say it to anybody but thee, I cannot say I am sorry. It looks as if the whole affair was so overruled as to prevent its being settled without the settlement of the leading question, for of course this defeat must postpone the end."

How strong his feelings were was shown by the lecture which he delivered in the month of October, at the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, on the civil war in America. Public opinion in England was at that time seriously divided. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, the bulk of the working classes were strongly pro-Northern in their sympathies; but to a certain extent in those counties, and to a much greater degree in London and the south of England generally, the upper classes had taken their stand on the side of the South. There were very few men of anything like Mr. Forster's position who at this time openly declared themselves as advocates for the triumph of the North in its struggle with the Secessionists. Mr. Bright was of course a shining exception to the majority of his fellow-countrymen, and he lost no opportunity of making his opinions known; but next to Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, whose health was then failing, Mr. Forster was undoubtedly the most prominent of the public men of England who protested against the idea that the Great Republic was to be broken up in the interests of the slave-owners of the South. It is an indication of the position which he had thus obtained, as a representative of the feeling in favour of the North, that his lecture before the members of the Bradford Mechanics' Institute was reported at considerable length in the *Times*. The lecture left no room for doubt in the minds of those who heard it as to the opinions of Mr. Forster. It was an attempt to bring home to the people of this country the real character of a struggle which was at the time greatly misunderstood in England.

"The war arose," he said, "from the difficulty of solving

the problem whether Christian and civilized men should keep millions of their fellow-creatures in bondage—more particularly when those men were not in a distant country but living among them in their very homesteads as it were—and keep them as slaves, and treat them as though they were beasts.” The common view of that time in English society was that the whole contest was a political one; “a struggle,” as Lord Russell expressed it a few days after Mr. Forster lectured, “on one side for empire and on the other for independence.” Few persons now hold that opinion; but in 1861 there were comparatively few Englishmen of position who dared to refute it. Mr. Forster, however, was one of these.

“To those who had watched the progress of events upon the American continent,” he said, “it appeared absurdly unnecessary, nay, even puerile, to state that any other cause than slavery could be assigned for the civil war.” It was not merely, however, to bring home to the English public the real cause of the conflict that Mr. Forster spoke. He was still more anxious to impress upon his fellow-countrymen the duty laid upon them by the crisis in America. “He impressively urged,” says the report of his lecture, “that this country should adopt the principle of absolute non-intervention. We could not interfere for freedom or for the North. He trusted that nothing would condemn us in the disgrace of interfering for the South. . . . He thought that, in place of treating the struggle with a cold cynical indifference, the sympathies of Europe ought to be wholly with the North. We ought to make allowance for them in a time of so much calamity. We ought to wish them success, as we wished success to freedom. We ought to trust in the God of Justice and of Mercy, who, he believed—and he trusted that it was not irreverent to say so—was so shaping this question, terrible as it might seem, as to get rid of this, the greatest curse of a civilized and Christian country.”

To-day these words sound like mere truisms, but it was very different at the time when they were uttered.

The lecture attracted much attention on the part of those who were interested in the formation of a sound public opinion in this country on the events in America. Mr. Bradford Wood, the American minister at Copenhagen, was one among many of the Americans in Europe who wrote to thank Mr. Forster for his words.

“It is a gratifying surprise to me,” writes Mr. Wood, “to find such accuracy of knowledge on a subject where some of your leading journals, such as the *Times* and *Saturday Review*,

shew so much ignorance. It may be that I am mistaken as to the ignorance exhibited by those papers on American affairs, but that it is design, and in common with the *New York Herald* that they labour to bring about a war between Great Britain and the United States. I have my apprehensions that they might ultimately succeed in this nefarious design, unless Englishmen like yourself do all you can to counteract such wickedness. While reading your lecture I could almost fancy I was reading one given by Governor Chase, or some equally intelligent American. . . . I know that the emissaries of the South in Europe have said that they had assurance of assistance from England before the outbreak. I do not believe this, and Mr. Cobden assured me last spring, when I passed through England, that you had nothing to fear from your operatives. The death-blow to slavery will be when England procures her cotton from some other country than the United States. Should I again visit England, I shall pay my respects to you. I am here as the minister of the United States, and should you visit this city during my residence here I should be very happy to make your personal acquaintance."

The letter was forwarded through Mr. Cobden, who, in enclosing it, wrote to Mr. Forster as follows: "I read your address with much anxiety, and was glad to see you advocating what I regard as the right side in this deplorable civil war, against the attacks of so many who in this country are in their hearts with the South, partly from ignorance and partly because pure democracy is hateful to them. For myself I have made up my mind never to occupy myself in reasoning about the right or wrong side of a cause after people have begun to fight about it. This determination was the result of my experience in the Crimean war. . . . From the moment that men abdicate their reasoning powers and call in such arbitrators as steel and powder and horses and waggons to settle the matter in dispute, the issue depends entirely on the exhaustion of one or both parties. In the mean time the obviously impossible object—I mean impossible to those who look calmly on, and know anything about it—makes as good a battle-cry as any other. All that is wanted is a cry that everybody can utter. In the Crimean war it was the integrity of the Ottoman empire. In the present American struggle it is the integrity of the Union. I look upon both objects as alike impossible. What I am still much concerned about is the preservation of not only peace, but a good feeling if possible between England and America. To this end, reason and argument and moral influence may contribute, because as yet

we have not begun to knock each others' brains out. I have little faith in our Government. . . . All we can do is to keep a watchful eye. I was much pleased to see Lord de Grey intimate that it would be better to make any sacrifice to support the cotton interests than to violate our principle of blockade and international law to furnish the raw material of this industry. What I would say, therefore, is—be on your guard. It is in the earliest stages of a quarrel only that the friends of peace and justice can be of any use in averting war."

In the following month (November,) Mr. Forster visited Lord Houghton, at Fryston, and found there among his fellow-guests the American minister, Mr. Adams, and his wife; and it was whilst the party was staying in Lord Houghton's house that Mr. Adams received a telegram announcing the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the two envoys sent by the Confederate Government to Europe, whilst passengers on board an English mail vessel, by the captain of a United States cruiser.

"Well, my dearest," writes Mr. Forster to his wife, immediately after returning from Fryston, "of course you have heard this most deplorable news. We went to Pomfret Castle yesterday, and just as we got in, Adams said, in his cool, quiet way, 'I have got stirring news,' which indeed was a telegram from the Legation with the story. I think he is as much grieved as I am, and does not think a hundred Masons and Slidells would be worth the effect on us. But I suspect, from what he says, that Lord P. suspects himself that the seizure is within the letter of international law, intensely foolish as it has been. The leader in the *Times*, happily, is moderate in tone. . . . At the best, however, it is a great calamity."

The whole country was stirred to its depths, the eagerness to vindicate the outraged dignity of the English flag being stimulated by the fact that in doing so the ruling classes would be able to give practical effect to their strong sympathies with the American Secessionists. It was a time when the friends of the North were compelled to exert themselves, if they were not to allow their country to plunge headlong into a conflict which would have been a calamity to the civilization of the world.

Mr. Forster did his best to calm the public agitation. He seized the first opportunity of addressing a few words to the Bradford electors upon the subject. On December 3rd, he went to London, used all his influence with the leading Liberal politicians whom he knew, to induce them to take a calm view of the situation.

"I have been busy talking all day," he writes to his wife, December 4th, "and trust I have thrown some oil on the troubled waters, but struggling for peace is like the struggles of a drowning man. I breakfasted with De Grey, then spent more than an hour with Layard, then some time with Townsend and Hutton. On the whole, though both sides expect war, I am hopeful. I trust I have done something to combat the foregone conclusion that Seward wishes war. General Scott's letter will do good, and I am especially glad, as I have been hearing all day the French *canard* about him."

From London he went down to Fox How, the home of Mrs. Arnold, near Ambleside, and he records in his diary a "long talk" he had with Miss Martineau on the American question. For the moment it absorbed all his thoughts. His one anxiety was not to induce the English Government to withdraw from a proper demand for reparation for the outrage upon our flag, but to lead those in authority and those who had the power of influencing public opinion, to adopt such a tone as would make it comparatively easy for the American Government to comply with the demands of Lord Palmerston. His hopeful anticipations of a pacific settlement of the dispute were, as we know, realized; but whilst matters were still in suspense he addressed his constituents, strongly urging that, in case of the refusal of the American Government to give up Mason and Slidell, we should propose an arbitration before resorting to war. Such a war, he declared, whatever its occasion might be, would practically be a war in the cause of slavery. "I am not prepared to fight," said he, "in that cause, until I have done everything in my power to avert war. If, after having done this, the Northern Government still insist that there shall be war, the responsibility rests with them; but I shall have nothing to do with it until I am sure that everything has been done to prevent so great a calamity." The result of his urgent appeal to his constituents was the adoption of a resolution in favour of a settlement of the question by arbitration, in the event of the refusal of Mr. Lincoln's Government to comply with the English request for the liberation of the Confederate envoys. These speeches of his secured for him the honour of a leading article in the *Times*, criticising severely his proposal, and condemning as utterly absurd and unreasonable the notion that England would consent to arbitrate when a reasonable *casus belli* had been afforded to her. Happily the difficulty was solved by the good sense and moderation of the American ministers themselves, though not until a million of money had been

wasted by this country over military preparations, due to what Mr. Bright justly called "an unhappy accident."

In the session of 1862, Mr. Forster and his family took up their residence at the house No. 18, Montagu Street. His diary shows that at this time his social engagements began to increase both in numbers and in importance. One of his closest and most intimate friends was Lord de Grey, the present Marquis of Ripon, and frequent mention is made of the breakfasts at which they met and discussed those political questions in which they were chiefly interested, the subject of education being one of the most important of them. It proved in after years to be a fortunate circumstance that Lord de Grey and Mr. Forster had been enabled to come to a thorough understanding with each other with regard to the educational wants of the people. No one can doubt that Mr. Forster's work at the Education Office, in 1870, was greatly facilitated owing to the fact that the President of the Council was his old friend and fellow-worker in the education cause.

The Cosmopolitan Club was a favourite resort of his then and throughout the remainder of his life; and he seldom fails to record in his diary the names of the more interesting persons whom he met and with whom he conversed there. His friendship with the persons of literary and intellectual distinction, whose acquaintance he had made in Yorkshire, instead of being interrupted by his parliamentary duties, was strengthened by the opportunity which residence in London afforded of frequent intercourse. He and Mrs. Forster were regular attendants at Vere Street Chapel, of which at that time the Rev. Frederick Maurice was the incumbent. Mr. Forster had objected strongly to Maurice's views regarding the early Quakers, but his affection and deep respect for Mr. Maurice never suffered any diminution. Among the social intimacies of his life at this time, however, none was really of greater importance than his friendship with the American minister, Mr. Adams, and with the American circle in London. Throughout this session of 1862 he continued to be one of the staunchest champions of the North in the House of Commons, constantly opposing the attempts which were still made by Mr. Gregory and other friends of the South to induce Parliament to interfere in the struggle, either by the recognition of the Confederacy, or by a refusal to recognize the blockade proclaimed by the North on the Confederate seaboard. When an insidious attempt was made to induce this country to promote the interests of the South by offering her mediation between the belligerents, no one opposed the proposal more

strongly than he did. His firm conviction was, as we have seen, that the battle was one between slavery and abolition, and his whole anxiety, seeing that England had no right to interfere on the side of the North, was to frustrate the efforts of that large and influential section of English society which wished to bring about intervention in the interests of the South. That the war would result sooner or later in the entire abolition of slavery was his profound conviction, though with characteristic frankness he confessed that he could not for his own part see how this result, certain as it was to be attained, was to be brought about.

Another question of importance occupied much of the thought of Parliament during this session of 1862. This was the proposed introduction of a revised code, under which grants were to be made to children according to their age and the proportion of their attendances at school. Public opinion was at last beginning to awake to the fact, so long patent to the more thoughtful class among us, that our want of a system of national education was a disgrace to us as a people. Mr. Forster on the platform had for years been distinguished by his advocacy of a great reform in the whole educational system of this country; but when the terms of the new code were made known, he was one of those who believed that it would aggravate rather than remove the existing evils. His chief opposition was to the mechanical grouping of children by age in deciding their claim to the capitation fees. He joined Mr. Walpole in opposing the code, and it was in no small degree owing to his opposition that eventually the new regulations were modified in such a manner as to make them generally acceptable to the House. They fell far short, indeed, of that which he and all other educational reformers desired; but they were at least a step in the right direction, and they brought the public mind nearer to the contemplation as a practical measure of that great scheme of national education upon the establishment of which his heart was set. One result of the opposition of the House to the scheme was the resignation of Mr. Lowe, then Vice-President of the Council.

Proof of the importance of the position which Forster was beginning to take in the House of Commons is furnished by the fact that in May he was specially asked by Mr. Brand, the Liberal whip, to reply to Sir Stafford Northcote, who had given notice that he intended to attack Mr. Gladstone for a speech in favour of reduction of expenditure which he had made at Manchester.

The prominent part which had thus fallen to Mr. Forster's

lot led to his being involved in one of the many attempts which have been made by the Radical party in the House of Commons to grapple with the great question of national expenditure. He and Messrs. Baxter and Stansfeld resolved to bring forward a motion in favour of reduction, for the purpose of affording moral support to Mr. Gladstone in the economic policy which he was advocating. The proposal assumed practical shape at a breakfast-party given by Mr. Forster, which was attended by Mr. Childers, Mr. Baines, Mr. Seely, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Leatham, and others, it being resolved that the resolution should be moved by Mr. Stansfeld and seconded by Mr. Forster. Unfortunately, as has too often been the case with these platonic demonstrations in favour of economy in the House of Commons, the well-meaning scheme miscarried. "Stansfeld's motion;" says Mr. Forster (Diary, June 3rd), "did not speak on it. Such a *fiasco*! He said a few words on Palmerston's amendment. Not well received; but no wonder. The whole affair a great mess."

Amid the parliamentary labours that were now pressing upon him he lost none of his interest in his domestic and business affairs, above all in the welfare of his workpeople. In 1862 the second great international exhibition was held in London. The death of the Prince Consort in the preceding December did much to deprive it of the brilliancy which attached to the original Exhibition in 1851. It was, however, an event of great importance to the industrial fortunes of this country. The Exhibition of 1851 had done much to bring new ideas into the minds of Englishmen of the upper classes; the Exhibition of 1862 did even more to familiarize artisans with the condition of labour abroad. It was, indeed, described at the time as a great object-lesson for those engaged in manufactures in this country. Mr. Forster and his partner, Mr. Fison, determined that their workpeople should have the advantage of that lesson, and they accordingly brought the whole body of their *employés*, six hundred in number, from the peaceful Yorkshire village to see the great sight in London. This, if I mistake not, was the first occasion upon which any large body of workpeople had been brought by their employers from a distant part of the country to London for such a purpose. Mr. Forster showed his usual energy and zeal in carrying out that part of the work which fell to him—the entertainment and care of the workpeople in London. An unfurnished block, just built by Mr. Cook, the well-known excursion agent, was hired and temporarily fitted up for the entertainment of the people.

Diary, July 1st.—"Went to city in morning to see city police about trip. Dined at home at half-past three; Mr. Black with us. Two policemen came from Sir Richard Mayne to help with the people. Was at Great Northern at 5.30, waiting for workpeople; their train arrived about seven. Sent the women in vans to Cook's house, and men off with policemen to their lodgings. They cheered children in balcony as they passed Montagu Street. Jane and I busy settling them in their home till past ten.

"*July 2nd.*—Breakfasted early; down at house at half-past eight. Took people down river in two steamers to Westminster Bridge; then took people into Westminster Hall, House of Commons, House of Lords, and Westminster Abbey. Lord Charles Russell gave leave to take people in sections of sixty to Strangers' Gallery. I stood below and explained to them. Dean of Westminster let them go into Henry VIII's Chapel. Then took them by palace and parks to International Bazaar. Met Sir George Grey and Brand. Ran them across Constitution Hill, policemen stopping the traffic. Jane with us at Westminster Hall. Took the women and half the rifle corps to house. Sent the men into bazaar to dine; then to Exhibition. Collected people at fountain at three-quarters past six. Took them to house and found them all right. Stayed with them till ten, when they sang Evening Hymn. Then Jane and I went home, tired enough.

July 3rd.—"Jane and I, with Eddie and Pen, down at house, after our breakfast, at half-past eight. Took the people in steamers down the river to front of Tower; back to St. Paul's Wharf, then into St. Paul's. By wish of archdeacon they went into service. The rifle corps went into crypt to see the Duke of Wellington's tomb; then walked down Old Street in the rain to King's Cross, city police stopping traffic at Newgate. Punctual to a minute at station. At quarter-past twelve saw train off in Fison's charge."

During the closing weeks of this session of 1862 he was much exercised by the Poaching Prevention Bill, which had been brought in in the interests of the country gentlemen. He fought it resolutely, taking the lead of the Radicals who were opposed to it; but he was unable to bring about its defeat, and had to be content with the knowledge that by various amendments introduced at his suggestion it had been reduced to nonsense.

How quickly he was growing in public estimation was proved by the fact that his name was repeatedly mentioned in connection with the appointment of a successor to Mr. Laing

as financial member of the Indian Council, and that he was sounded by two of the most important members of the Radical party in the House of Commons as to the formation of an independent Liberal party, holding advanced views, and designed to keep in check the more Whiggish tendencies of the Palmerstonians. Like many other schemes of the same kind, this however, came to nothing.

A severe attack of illness, an affection of the throat, to a recurrence of which he was always liable, prostrated him in the autumn. He was laid up for some time, and was compelled to go to Scarborough to recruit his health. As soon as he had recovered his strength, he threw himself into committee work in connection with the movement for the relief of the distress in Lancashire. His business affairs at this time were prospering, and the freedom from pecuniary anxiety enabled him not only to devote more of his time to public work, but to subscribe largely to public objects. Of these there were none at the moment which interested him more deeply than that movement which was designed, not merely to relieve the terrible distress of the Lancashire operatives, but to support them in the almost heroic attitude which they assumed during the struggle from which they suffered so severely.

The object of the friends of the South was, of course, to excite feeling against the North, by pointing to the terrible consequences of the blockade of the cotton ports, so far as our Lancashire operatives were concerned. Mr. Forster was one of those who believed that, whatever the consequences might be to us, it was our bounden duty to stand aloof from the struggle in which issues greater than any affecting our commercial prosperity or the welfare of a particular class were involved. In delivering his annual address to his constituents, towards the close of November, he said :

“Our hearts were full at that very moment of the miseries of our suffering fellow-countrymen in Lancashire. What could sound more plausible than to exhort those people who were cutting their own throats and starving our people at the same time not to attempt this old-fashioned and brutal way of settling their disputes, but to entreat them to do it by reason and argument. If exhortation and entreaty would do this—and they all exhorted and entreated to the utmost of their ability—surely if they could induce them to settle the slavery question, for it was slavery, let them not mistake it, which lay at the bottom of this war, by reason and argument, by all means let us do so. The cause of freedom at any rate would not thereby lose ; but there was not the slightest hope that

mere exhortation would have had an effect which had not been produced by the public opinion of Europe expressed as it had been. . . . He had never been one who in past days had admired American government or praised American freedom ; because, until the stand lately made by the Republican party, he had felt that the so-called American freedom was a sham freedom based upon the worst form of government, personal slavery. Men had laughed at him, and said that he was fanatical upon that point ; but he thought that it had been proved that he was right, and that American freedom had been shown to be based upon a rotten foundation, and if an attempt was now made to patch up the Union on the basis of slavery there would neither be freedom nor peace in America ; for, after all, there were men there, however they might be cried down, who cared too much about freedom to permit slavery to be continued without agitation. He would therefore earnestly support the British Government in opposing all interference in American affairs, which at the present time would be tantamount to supporting slavery."

One of the consequences of this speech was a discussion into which it had led him with Mr. Cobden. In the course of his address Mr. Forster expressed his astonishment that Mr. Cobden had advised advanced Liberals to withdraw their support from Lord Palmerston, and to put Mr. Disraeli into power in his place, on the ground that Mr. Disraeli on some domestic question was really more advanced than the Prime Minister. Forster strongly disapproved of the conduct of the Government in home affairs, but he had far more confidence in Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston in foreign affairs than in Mr. Disraeli and Lord Derby, and he offered a stout opposition to the suggestion of Mr. Cobden. It will have been gathered from his speech at Bradford that he really saw only one great fact in connection with the American struggle ; that was that the fate of the slave system was involved in it. All who knew him must have been aware that this fact alone was sufficient to determine his course of action. After his death, one who had known him better than most men, was discussing with one of his nearest relatives the course of his public life and the varying motives by which at various times his action had been guided. The conclusion to which both came was that the real master-passion of Forster's life was his abhorrence of slavery. He had inherited his feeling on the subject from his father ; it had been strengthened by his early intercourse with his uncle ; and it grew with his growth in experience and intellectual power. All through the American struggle it was

this passion which guided his course of action and led him to run counter to the prevailing sentiments among the upper classes of his fellow-countrymen, just as in subsequent years it was the same strong feeling which made him champion the mission of General Gordon to Khartoum and oppose the ministerial policy in South Africa, at the cost of his own popularity with the political party to which he belonged.

The course of the struggle in America cannot be followed in detail in these pages. It must suffice to say that in the sessions of 1863 and 1864 he continued in Parliament, whilst advocating the observance of strict neutrality by England, to use every opportunity to counteract those who were endeavouring under one subterfuge or another to advance the interests of the Confederates. In his own district he presided over many meetings held for the purpose of awakening public interest in the emancipation question, and did much by his speeches to stimulate the sound opinions which Yorkshiremen held upon the subject. In Parliament he early foretold the troubles that were certain to accrue to this country from the laxity of the authorities in not preventing the building and the escape of the Confederate cruisers. It was in connection with the question of our duty as regards the building of ships of war for the Confederates that he received a letter from Mr. Cobden, from which the following are extracts:—

“Midhurst, April 5th, 1863.

“By last mail I got a letter from Sumner expressing so much anxiety, that I wrote privately to Lord Russell, urging that the British Government should be more than passive in enforcing our foreign enlistment law, and suggesting as a proof of friendliness that he should give Mr. Adams the particulars of all the vessels being built for the Chinese Government. In reply, he tells me that he had anticipated my suggestion; on which I have written to Mr. Adams to suggest that he should make this fact and the particulars furnished to him public. It would show a friendly spirit, which should be known in the States, and it would remove the mistake under which some of our respectable shipbuilders are constructing vessels of war, and compel them to invent some other customer than the Emperor of China. Nothing could be worse than the tone of the Premier and the House on the last evening before the recess. It is to be regretted that the subject was not reserved for a more thorough debate. I understood that you were going to ensure a favourable reply or otherwise not to bring on the question. I am afraid you have entered the arena of

parliamentary life with too lenient an opinion of official men. The course Palmerston has taken will involve England in a war or a great humiliation. Every word of his insulting taunts and puerile recriminations in the above debate will be burnt as with hot iron into the memories of the Americans, who have a special dislike for the man."

The debate to which Mr. Cobden alluded was one raised by Mr. Forster regarding certain rams then being built in English ports. Writing to his wife, April 7th, he says :

"I send thee a letter from Cobden, received last evening, which much increased my anxiety lest the debate had done harm. He ought to have remembered that he strongly advised my bringing it on, irrespective of ministerial replies. Imagine, then, my relief this morning on hearing that Government had actually seized a ship in Liverpool, and my pleasure in being able to write to Cobden that after all he was right in advising no delay."

Cobden's criticism of Mr. Forster's speech, though characteristic of the impetuous leader of the anti-corn law movement, was not that of other advocates of the Northern cause. A contemporary newspaper observes with regard to the same speech, "that it was exceedingly temperate, well composed, and argumentative, and put that master of dialectics, the Solicitor-General, completely on his mettle to answer it."

It must not be supposed that Mr. Forster was one of those advocates of the Northern cause who out-Federalized the Federals in their devotion to it. Whilst he was urgent in impressing what he felt to be their duty upon his own fellow-countrymen, he was equally anxious to secure justice for our Government at the hands of the heated partisans of the North. Writing to an American gentleman, a friend of Mr. Sumner's, October 13th, 1863, he said :

"I am much obliged to you for your note, although I much regretted not having the pleasure of seeing you. I wanted much to impress upon you my strong conviction that our Government mean the preservation of strict neutrality, but that their difficulties in so doing are much increased by the suspicion of their intentions expressed by your statesmen. I do not doubt that you will have learned during your stay that our Government is under constant pressure from France to act against you. Surely resistance to such pressure ought to be met on your side with confidence rather than with suspicion. I therefore cannot say with what regret I read Mr. Sumner's speech, which to us reads like a laboured effort to prove to

your people that the English Government is not only their enemy, but even more their enemy than the French. I think Mr. Sumner ought to know that such a speech as this makes it very uphill work for your friends here; because it gives a colour to the argument so insisted on by the partisans of the South here and in France that you are determined to revenge yourselves on us when you can. I know, of course, the utter absurdity of such talk; but any one who believes it will wish to prevent your having the power to revenge yourselves on us, will wish to establish a Southern Confederacy; and therefore an attack upon England, such as Mr. Sumner's, which for the reason above stated I believe to be unfair, is not only an appeal to the anti-English war feeling on your side, but a direct and powerful aid to the Southern sympathizers on this."

Everything now seemed to conspire to bring Mr. Forster to the front in Parliament. He had been forced into a position of prominence in connection with the absorbing question of the time, by the strength of his feeling with regard to slavery, and by the fact that his knowledge of American questions was probably unequalled by that of any other member of the House. Many newspapers were beginning to point to the brilliant future which seemed to lie before him. Writing to his wife regarding some of these flattering predictions, he says:

"You see we had jumped at the same estimate of all these puffs; notwithstanding there remains this fact, that the want by the Liberal party of a new man is great and felt to be great. The old Whig leaders are worn out. There are no new Whigs. Cobden and Bright are impracticable and un-English, and there are hardly any hopeful Radicals. There is a great prize of power and influence to be aimed at. There is no denying this; and I do not think duty tells me not to keep the prize before me; but may I direct my course in humility and with the sense of the responsibility of every step and of every accession of influence. It is by dwelling on this responsibility that I can alone hope to be saved from selfishness and the temptations of vanity whether gratified or wounded."

In this year, 1863, Mr. Forster took the house No. 80, Eccleston Square, for the season. He liked it so much, that he finally took a lease of it; and it was for the remainder of his life his London residence.

The civil war in America was now entering upon its last stage, and it is noteworthy that, as the certainty of a victory for the North and the Union became clearer, so did the

bitterness of the sympathizers with the South become greater. Their efforts in the House of Commons were still directed towards procuring some intervention on the part of this country which should either directly or indirectly be favourable to the Confederates. But ministers were learning wisdom. The depredations of the *Alabama*, a vessel built in an English shipyard, and sent forth on its devastating voyage from an English port, were beginning to cause grave uneasiness among the more thoughtful class of politicians in this country, and ministers were now resolute in their determination to prevent the equipment of any similar ship. During the session of 1864 they were bitterly assailed by the Southern sympathizers because of their action in seizing two steam rams which, although ostensibly being built for the French Government, were in reality designed as companions to the *Alabama*.

Mr. Forster, along with Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, did everything possible to maintain the Government in the strict observance of the laws of neutrality. It was no longer necessary to labour incessantly for the purpose of setting forth the true merits of the great struggle in America. The English public by this time had learned the lesson which the friends of the North had from the first been endeavouring to teach it; and though in high places the feeling in favour of the South was as strong as it had ever been, among the masses of the population there was a general conviction that the triumph of the North was not only certain but in every way to be desired.

A personal question of some interest attracted not a little attention during the session of 1864. Mr. James Stansfeld, the member for Halifax, had in the previous year accepted office under Lord Palmerston as Junior Lord of the Treasury. It transpired during the course of a trial in Paris, on a charge of an alleged conspiracy to assassinate the Emperor of the French, that some of the conspirators had been in correspondence with a Mr. Flowers, residing at a house in Thurloe Square. The number of the house was the same as that in which Mr. Stansfeld lived; and the members of the Opposition were eager to bring home to one of Lord Palmerston's colleagues a charge of complicity with the political assassins of the Continent. Mr. Stansfeld himself, it need hardly be said, was wholly innocent of any offence of the kind; but his assailants were able to establish the fact that the Mr. Flowers, whose name was mentioned in the correspondence of the conspirators in Paris, was identical with the great Italian Mazzini, who was known to be Mr. Stansfeld's intimate friend. A hot cry was raised against the member for Halifax. When the

question was brought before the House of Commons, Mr. Stansfeld acknowledged his friendship with Mazzini, but scornfully repudiated the idea that Mazzini was mixed up in any scheme of assassination. The first man to stand by Mr. Stansfeld's side on the floor of the House was Mr. Forster. He, too, claimed the friendship of Mazzini, and in a speech of genuine warmth and emotion defended both Mr. Stansfeld and the Italian patriot from the disgraceful charges which were being brought against them by the members of the Tory party. The House of Commons by a narrow majority refused to pass anything like a vote of censure upon Mr. Stansfeld; but the affair had created a profound impression abroad, and Mr. Stansfeld felt constrained to withdraw from the Ministry.

It was in this same session of 1864 that the question of parliamentary reform was again brought prominently before the House by the introduction of Mr. Baines's bill for establishing a £6 rental qualification in boroughs. Mr. Forster strongly supported the measure, the principle of which received a qualified degree of support from Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the close of the year fresh proof was afforded of the growth of Forster in parliamentary influence and position by his appointment as a member of the Schools Inquiry Commission, the object of which was to consider the existing endowments of the middle-class schools of England, and the whole question of middle-class education.

The spring of 1865 was made memorable by one of the heaviest blows which the political life of England had sustained for many years—the premature death of Mr. Cobden. Cobden and Forster had not always been able to agree; and a year or two before there had been a somewhat sharp passage-at-arms between them regarding one of Mr. Forster's speeches to which Cobden objected. No difference of opinion, however, diminished the personal respect which each felt for the other. Writing to Mr. Forster, January 19th, 1865, Mr. Cobden says:

“I read with pleasure your speech, and noted your too kind allusion to myself. I am not an habitual reader of speeches. Perhaps, like the grocer's apprentice in the matter of figs, I have had a surfeit. You and Bright are exceptions to my rule. Your utterances have a distinct meaning. Gladstone's speeches have the effect on my mind of a beautiful strain of music. I can rarely remember any clear unqualified expression of opinion on any subject outside his political, economical, and financial statements. I remember on the occasion when he left Sir Robert Peel's Government on account of the Maynooth grants, and when the House met in unusual

numbers to hear his explanation, I sat beside Villiers and Ricardo for an hour, listening with real pleasure to his beautiful rhetorical involutions and evolutions, and at the close turning to one of my neighbours and exclaiming, 'What a marvellous talent is this! Here have I been listening with pleasure for an hour to his explanation, and I know no more why he left the Government than before he commenced.' It is, however, a talent of questionable value for public leadership."

Cobden died on the 2nd of April, 1865. On the 10th of March he wrote his last letter to Mr. Forster, and one extract at least is worthy of being given from it:

"The Brahmins in Hindostan and the Daimios in Japan owe their sway to a public feeling about as rational as that which procures the homage of West Riding clothiers to our feudal aristocracy. What is to be the course of political events in a not remote future in this country is a question which I have often asked myself, especially since I have witnessed, in relation to American affairs, how stupidly prejudiced and opposed our middle and upper classes are to the ideas which lie at the foundation of all political enfranchisements everywhere within this island. Is there one in a thousand who foresees the great struggle against feudalism which impends over us or our children? Nay, is there one in ten thousand of us that dreams of the fact that we are the only nation where feudalism with its twin monopolies, landed and ecclesiastical, is still in power? This is literally the only great country which, to use Goldwin Smith's phrase, is still wearing its grave-clothes of the Middle Ages. The longer the evil exists the larger it grows. In the rural counties the large landed properties are swallowing up the smaller, till the middle-class political element is rapidly disappearing altogether; but it is in Ireland that the operation of the landed and ecclesiastical monopolies is felt with the bitterest severity. As in mechanics, so in politics, the whole cannot be permanently stronger than its weakest part; and it is in Ireland that the crash of feudalism will be first heard."

Extract from Diary.

"*Sunday, April 2nd.*—Dined at Reform Club. Much shocked on getting there to hear of Cobden's death at eleven in the morning.

"*Monday, April 3rd.*—After breakfast went to Reform Club, found Bright, Bazley, etc., talking of adjournment of House on account of Cobden. Bright in great grief. He sent

me to consult Gladstone, who talked to me about pension to Mrs. Cobden. Went back and brought Bright to Gladstone. Went to House and heard eulogies of Cobden by Palmerston and Disraeli; Bright saying a few words with great feeling. Drew up a letter with Bazley, at Bright's suggestion, for procession of M.P.'s with Cobden's hearse on Wednesday morning, but Moffat called at dinner-time to countermand it.

"*Thursday, April 7th.*—Went by special train at 9.40 to Cobden's funeral at Lavington, near Midhurst. Beautiful day; very striking scene; respect without show. Went in train with Adams, Moran, etc."

One of the great bonds between Mr. Forster and Mr. Cobden was the practical identity of their views on the subject of the American war. Both were rejoicing, at the time when Cobden was struck down by death, at the imminent prospect of the complete triumph of the North. A few weeks after Cobden had been laid in the grave, the terrible tragedy of Lincoln's assassination occurred.

Extract from Diary.

"*Wednesday, April 26th.*—On getting to House heard rumour of President Lincoln's assassination, and attack on Seward. Speaker gave me printed slip. Took hansom to Reform Club. There saw third edition of *Times* with it. Still I could not believe it. Went on to Adams. With me another hansom drew up with boy with telegram. Went upstairs with servant. He opened and read it. Full account from Stanton. I said at end, 'God grant your people a cool head.' Adams perfectly cool. All London staggering. I went to Foreign Office. Saw Layard and Hammond; they had no special despatch. Took down my account of Adams, to send to Lord Russell and telegraph to the Queen. Back to House, where I signed address of M.P.'s to Adams."

This session, which witnessed events of such deep interest to politicians both in England and in the United States, was memorable also as being the last during which Lord Palmerston sat in Parliament. Remembering all that followed upon Palmerston's death, it is interesting to recall the fact that the session witnessed the commencement of the parliamentary movement on behalf of Ireland which has had such momentous results. On March 31st, Mr. Maguire, the well-known member for Cork, moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the laws regulating the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland, with a view to their more equitable adjustment. This motion was seconded by Mr. Forster. Lord Palmerston,

it was evident, was strongly opposed to it. At the outset of his speech he declared that if there was one thing a nation ought to respect it was the rights of property. But with his usual adroitness he did not offer any direct opposition to the proposal, contenting himself with suggesting a more limited inquiry into the tenure and improvement of land in Ireland under existing Acts. This suggestion was agreed to, and for the moment Irish affairs were allowed to fall once more into the background.

We must turn, however, for a short space from public affairs to matters more directly affecting Mr. Forster in his personal life. He had been very busy during the session in connection with the Schools Inquiry Commission, for it need hardly be said that he had thrown himself with all his energy into work so thoroughly congenial. His parliamentary duties, his business affairs, to say nothing of the committee work, of which he was always full, in connection with public movements, had filled up all his available time, so that before the session closed he was thoroughly worn out. He and his friend Mr. Ball left England in July for a trip in the Austrian Tyrol, which they greatly enjoyed.

Soon after his return from abroad Mr. Forster was seized with a sudden and violent choleraic attack. On October 16th he had been all day at a shooting match on the moor; that day was wet and foggy, and he had probably taken a chill. Early on the following morning he was attacked with all the symptoms of cholera. His wife's diary says: "He was frightfully ill all day with cramps and sickness. We kept applying hot flannels to check the cramps—could do nothing; and we were helpless till Mr. Rhind came about five o'clock. He stilled the cramps by chloroform, the sickness by sulphuric acid, and God be thanked the danger was over by night. He passed a very restless and sleepless night, but had no relapse, and though very weak began to revive."

Cholera was in the country at this time and many people were interested in hearing of the means employed by Mr. Rhind, who was a man of great ability and originality. He wrote a letter to the *Times* to explain the treatment used, which he had found successful in other cases also.

The alarming character of this attack is reflected in a letter to Mrs. Forster from her brother, the Rev. E. P. Arnold, who had been staying with them at the time. "I am glad that when you wrote dear William was again better. . . . I never shall forget that Tuesday as long as I live. I was feeling so unwell myself that the suddenness and violence of his illness

made a still stronger impression than it would generally have done—but I shall always think with admiration of his courage and patience.”

Scarcely had Mr. Forster recovered, when he received from his wife a sudden summons to Rugby, whither she had been already called by the illness of their adopted son, Edward Arnold, who was at school there under Dr. Temple. The boy's state had suddenly become critical, and he hung between life and death for several days, his father watching over him with the tender solicitude of a woman. Some notes written by Mrs. Forster immediately afterwards give the outline of these anxious days. “As soon as William came he telegraphed for nurses. On Tuesday, E. was for the most part unconscious, but whenever we could penetrate to his consciousness he would take whatever he was told. William often succeeded in getting him to take things, and Edward generally knew him. On Wednesday morning, he seemed to be sinking very fast. Dr. E. left, saying he had lost the power to swallow and could not live an hour. . . . But this proved to be the crisis of the fever. He gradually revived, and consciousness, which had been completely suspended, gradually came back. For a week he continued in a most anxious state. But after the second Wednesday there was a more decided amendment. After the first week Miss Temple could not continue her help in nursing Edward, as first Bruce and then Yates were attacked with the same fever and lay ill at the sickhouse. Bruce recovered, but poor little Yates died after we left Rugby. My dear husband came to Rugby as often as he could, but was much engaged, as soon after the crisis of E.'s illness, he received the offer from Lord Russell of the Under-Secretaryship for the Colonies. He deferred the acceptance for a week, and meantime made a speech at Bradford on reform, after which Lord Russell renewed his offer, thus almost pledging the Government to the views on reform which William had declared—so it was regarded in the country. Nothing could be more self-forgetting or beautiful than my dear husband's complete putting aside of all this question of worldly advancement as compared with his absorption in Edward's illness—he seemed to have no thought for it.

“The generous and affectionate sympathy and hospitality of the Temples can never be forgotten by us. Their house was turned into an hospital for an infectious fever, all the children turned out of it—and yet such was the completeness of their sympathy that one felt as if the sorrow were their own as well as ours. And so closes the history of this deep trial and wonderful deliverance, for which God be thanked.”

From this extract from Mrs. Forster's diary it will be seen that whilst Forster was in the midst of his anxiety regarding his son, he received the offer of a post in the Ministry. Lord Palmerston had died, and Lord Russell had succeeded him as Premier. A partial reconstruction of the ministry had taken place in consequence. Mr. Chichester Fortescue, who had been Under-Secretary for the Colonies, had been appointed Secretary for Ireland, and the former office was consequently vacant. On November 15th, Forster received an invitation from Lord Russell to call upon him at his house in London. He went to town from Rugby the next day.

The Premier offered him the Under-Secretaryship for the Colonies. "I made no hesitation," he says in his diary, "except on reform. He said Gladstone and he would bring in a bill. I stipulated for vertical extension. He assented, but said I might leave them if I did not like the details of the bill when I saw it. He used the word 'inquiry,' and I said I trusted there would be no Commission, stating strong objections thereto. Upon that point he could not give me a distinct answer, so I agreed to call again on Saturday at 11.30, after a Cabinet meeting. Came down to Rugby by 2.45 train. Found Edward improving. I wrote a note to Lord Russell stating that I understood I was to reserve my answer till I knew more about Commission."

This extract from Mr. Forster's diary will afford some indication of the strength of his feeling on the question of reform. Some time before Lord Palmerston's death, when it had been suggested that he was likely soon to obtain office, Forster had declared emphatically that he saw no possibility of his doing so whilst Palmerston remained at the head of affairs. However ambitious he might be of political distinction, he was resolute in his determination not to sacrifice to his own advancement a cause which lay so near to his heart. This feeling was just as strong now that the offer of an important post had actually been made to him, as it was when office still lay in the remote distance. Accordingly, on his return to his son's bedside at Rugby, on the day of his interview with Lord Russell, he wrote to the Prime Minister as follows:—

"School House, Rugby,
"November 16th, 1865.

"DEAR LORD RUSSELL,

"Upon thinking over our conversation of to-day, I see so much difficulty in the appointment of a Commission on the reform question, that I must beg your lordship to consider

your proposal to me, which on many grounds I should be glad to accept, unanswered until I have had the opportunity of seeing you on Saturday. I think this was our understanding; but to prevent possible misconception I felt sure you would allow me to write you a line.

“I am, my lord, with much respect,

“Yours faithfully,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

On Saturday, the 18th, he again saw Lord Russell.

Extract from Diary.

“Called on Lord Russell at 11.30. He could not give me answer about Commission. I stated my objections, which he heard very willingly, and proposed I should make my speech and he would write to me afterwards.” (A speech which he was about to make at a reform meeting at Bradford.) “I said, as he might not like what I said, I should not think myself ill used if he then withdrew his offer. So we left it. I having taken occasion to refer to his remark on Thursday that if I did not like the details of the bill I might retire.”

His son continued to improve, and he was able to leave him for Wharfedale, in order that he might prepare his speech for the Bradford meeting. Whilst he was there, and before the meeting took place, he received an urgent letter from Mr. Brand, the Liberal whip, begging him not to commit himself against a Commission of Inquiry on the reform question, and assuring him that such inquiry, if carried out by Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, would be *bonâ fide* and not intended for the purpose of delay. In reply to this letter he wrote (November 20th, 1865):

“With regard to a Reform Commission I have with you every confidence that Lord Russell and the Cabinet will propose nothing for the purpose of delay, or of shifting the responsibility; but I greatly fear a Commission would be so regarded, and, indeed, I do not see how a question of this importance can be referred by Government to men not its own officers, without the Government losing its hold of it. If this Commission were not composed of men of great weight and of different views it would be useless, because considered incompetent and one-sided. On the other hand, a weighty Commission, with all the appurtenances of a secretary, of hearing evidence, and of framing a report, would I fear, while sitting, take the place of the Cabinet in the public mind, so far

as reform was concerned. Again, the consequent delay, though delay be not intended, would be a wet blanket to all support by reformers, and depend upon it anti-reformers are not to be conciliated or got round. I hope you will not consider me impracticable or presuming, if I beg you to let this side of the question have its fair hearing from Lord Russell and the Cabinet."

On Wednesday, the 22nd, he made his speech at Bradford. It is probably not often that a public man has had to speak under more delicate and difficult circumstances. Throughout his life he had been anxious to find a place in the service of his country as one of the Ministers of the Crown. The realization of his laudable ambition was now within his reach; but between it and him stood a question of principle, and he was prepared to sacrifice everything rather than his own convictions and his pledges to those who had believed in him in the past. In addressing his constituents, after paying a tribute to the great qualities of Lord Palmerston, he dwelt upon the gravity of the crisis in domestic politics which the country was then facing. "The country," he said, "not only demands reform, but it expects it, and the Government are aware that it is necessary to their existence, to their continuance as a Government, that they should meet that demand. . . . I never addressed a meeting on reform in this town of Bradford," he continued, "with anything like the same hope upon the question as I do now; because I have confidence that the Government will bring forward a bill, because I have confidence, looking at the character of the men composing the Government, that it will be a comprehensive bill, and because I have also confidence that when they bring it forward it will be with a determination to stand or fall by that bill. . . . Depend upon it that the only danger the Government are in upon this subject, if they are in any danger at all, is that they may make the opposition greater than they need by want of boldness in bringing forward the measure. I trust they will not fall into that mistake. The danger is not so much opposition on the ground of principle, but a danger which I feel it almost humiliating to bring before a meeting such as this. I think there may be a great many members who, having just had all the turmoil and all the disturbance of a sharply contested election, will not be very much in favour of the introduction of a measure, the result of the passing of which would be to bring on another election pretty speedily; and I think it is possible that men in that position may be bringing influence to bear upon Government to delay the

introduction of that measure. But, after all, these are considerations and influences which a Government in earnest can afford to despise, and which need not delay the settlement of this question for a moment. I have no fear whatever for the Government; as I trust they will come forward at the earliest possible period next session and declare they are only waiting to bring forward a Reform Bill, and that an enormous majority of their party in the House will support them."

This declaration of his opinions was, it will be seen, sufficiently uncompromising, and no one who heard it at the time could have imagined that at that very moment the question of his admission to the Government was to a large extent dependent upon his attitude on the question of reform. On November 24th he called on Lord Russell, who received him cordially, and renewed the offer of the Under-Secretaryship, telling him that it was all right about the Commission. He accordingly accepted the offer.

To his Wife.

"Reform Club, November 24th, 1865.

"MY DEAREST WIFE,

"The telegram would inform thee I am a Minister, 'a fox without a tail,' as De Grey says. Almost the first words Lord Russell said were, 'Well, I have read your speech, and like it very much.' 'I am glad you do not dislike it,' said I. Then, after talking the meeting over, he said, 'Well, there are two things to talk over; first, as to inquiry, we find we can get a good deal of information from clerks of unions, but whatever more information we want we shall get opinions only from ourselves,' or words to that effect, so there was no more talk about the Commission. He then went on to talk about how to admit some, not only officers, but also rank and file workmen, without admitting those who would sell their votes for a glass of gin, which turned into questions by him as to the workmen in my district, of whom he supposed me informed; during which talk we admitted it was a matter needing care and thought, but I added I feared there would be disappointment if the bill offers less than the £6 qualification he offered before, unless there were counterbalancing concessions. He then, after a good deal of pleasant talk, said as to the office he supposed there was nothing to prevent my joining. I said if after my speech he was willing to take me, I had nothing more to say, except that I should consider it a high honour to serve under him. 'You know,' he said, 'if

you take office you must have trust in Gladstone and me.' I said I had it, and I believed my party also. And so we mentally embraced, and he said he would write to Cardwell, upon whom I agreed to call to-morrow. I then, after telegraphing you, went to Chester Square, telling F. L., and agreeing to dine there this evening, and then on to De Grey, who was most cordial and pleased. I breakfasted with him this morning, and he also was much pleased with my speech, which, judging from the leaders in the *Daily News* and *Star*, has been a hit. Certainly my appointment immediately after this speech commits the Government on reform."

On the following day he took possession of his room at the Colonial Office, and did his first day's work there on Monday, November 27th. He records in his diary that the time was chiefly spent in looking through enclosures in the last Jamaica despatches. Two days later he notes that there is "very bad news from Jamaica of slaughter by the troops and under martial law," and that he has been busy for many hours reading the despatches. This bad news referred to the rising of the negroes and to the severe and relentless steps taken by Mr. Eyre, the governor, for the purpose of restoring order. The country, before many weeks were over, was deeply agitated by the discussion raised, not so much by the negro rising, as by the measures adopted for its suppression. Of these the most noticeable was the seizure by the governor of Mr. Gordon, a half-caste member of the House of Assembly, who had long been known as a sympathizer with the negro party in the island. Martial law had been proclaimed on the outbreak of the disturbance in the districts affected by it. Mr. Gordon, however, had taken no active part in the insurrection, nor was any complicity in any acts of violence ever brought home to him. At the time of the rising he was residing in Kingston, where the civil law was still in force. Despite this fact, he was arbitrarily arrested by Mr. Eyre, and transported to one of the districts in which martial law had been proclaimed. He was there tried by a court-martial composed of three young officers, found guilty, sentenced to death, and forthwith hanged. This extraordinary act, justified by the adherents of Governor Eyre on the old plea that the safety of the State is the supreme law, excited a bitter demonstration of hostility in this country, and loud demands were made for the removal from his office of one who had so singularly violated all constitutional laws.

It was unfortunate for Mr. Forster that almost in the first

days of his official life he should have to deal with such a question. No one, of course, who had studied his past career, could have any doubt as to the strength and the genuineness of his sympathy with the native population of Jamaica. All through his life he had ranged himself on the side of the subject races of the civilized world, and he was not likely to desert them now. But he was quite new to office, and he had, as his chief, in Mr. Cardwell a man holding high rank in the Cabinet and exercising great influence over the Prime Minister and Mr. Gladstone. Still Mr. Forster's opinions were not without their due weight in the Ministry. The Government resolved, within a fortnight of the receipt of the first news of Mr. Gordon's execution, to send out a Commission of Inquiry to Jamaica, a determination which was strongly supported by Mr. Forster himself. The principal members of the Commission were Sir Henry Storks, Mr. Russell Gurney, and Mr. Maule. With the appointment of this Commission the political events of 1865 came to an end.

To MR. ELLIS YARNALL.

“Colonial Office, London, January 17th, 1866.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You will have heard of my acceptance of office under Lord Russell's Ministry, and I have now been hard at work for several weeks. It was curious that my first official experience should be this sad Jamaica business, which I have felt, as you may imagine, a most anxious matter; but I am fully satisfied with all that the Government has done in the business since I joined it.

“Would that your Southerners could take warning by Jamaica—most of whose misfortune may, I think, be placed to the efforts of the employers, after emancipation, to obtain labour by law cheaper and on more stringent conditions than the market price and conditions, after they had lost the power of getting it by the task. All their attempts to evade the laws of supply and demand defeat themselves, and merely result in mutual class injuries and class feuds or drive the labourers away. . . .

“Believe me to remain,

“Yours ever faithfully,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

CHAPTER X.

REFORM—VISIT TO THE EAST.

MR. FORSTER'S career at the Colonial Office was of short duration. The Russell-Gladstone administration justified his confidence in the sincerity of its feelings on the reform question by bringing in the well-known measure which, if not very far-reaching, was at least entitled to the epithet bestowed upon it by Mr. Bright of "an honest bill;" and, after a fierce battle in the House of Commons, in the course of which Mr. Lowe won remarkable distinction by the brilliancy and the bitterness of the invective with which he assailed the Government and the reform party, the Administration was defeated and retired from office in the month of July. Yet, brief as was his experience at the Colonial Office, it was of great value to Mr. Forster. His friend, Harriet Martineau, in writing to Mrs. Arnold to congratulate her upon his appointment, observed that "of course there were evils in all great changes, but she hoped that in his acceptance of a post in the Ministry the good would predominate. When I feel for him the loss of freedom, and for ourselves the loss of so many free speeches on various topics," she wrote, "I turn to the fact that this is an indispensable passage to power, and to more freedom, though not entire, and to the thought of what he may be able to do for Jamaica and the North American colonies, and to how he may keep Mr. Cardwell up to the mark. I have no doubt of his showing the country what a man's work *may* be under the stimulus of such a conscience and such a heart as his."

The Jamaica question was undoubtedly one of great difficulty and perplexity. Mr. Forster, as has been seen, had barely entered upon office when this storm suddenly burst upon the heads of the Ministry with something like tropical violence. It was, of course, impossible that one in his subordinate position, newly entering upon official life, could have

his own way in dealing with so grave a problem. To what length he would have gone in order to pacify public feeling in England it would now be unprofitable to inquire. He clearly approved, however, of the steps taken by Lord Russell and Mr. Cardwell in recalling Governor Eyre, under the condemnation of a severe censure, and in refusing to undertake a criminal prosecution against him. There were many philanthropists, who had been accustomed to look to Mr. Forster as one of the foremost exponents of their special opinions, who were indignant because Ministers refused to place a distinguished public servant, who had been guilty of a deplorable error of judgment, at the bar of the Old Bailey, and many of these could not understand how Mr. Forster, whose sympathies with the subject and native population were so real and intense, could refuse to listen to their demand for vengeance upon Governor Eyre. They were not slow to pour their censures upon his head. It would have been an easy matter for Mr. Forster to have sheltered himself behind the perfectly truthful plea that the colonial policy of the Government was directed, not by himself, but by Mr. Cardwell; but this would have been utterly distasteful to him, and he quickly made it known that he entirely approved of the refusal of the Colonial Secretary to sanction Mr. Eyre's prosecution.

Writing to a friend, October 31st, 1866, with reference to the attacks which were being made upon him in connection with the Jamaica question, he says, "I send you Goldwin Smith's letter in case you have not read it. It is irksome enough, this compulsory Quakerism of my present position, obliging me to take any number of newspaper hits without return; and these, too, on the raw, as I am more sensitive on the negro question than any other. I think, however, I could reply to Goldwin Smith. For instance, he must never have read, or have forgotten, my speech on C. Buxton's motion, because there I answered by anticipation the question to which he says I should give a distinct reply, inasmuch as I was the only speaker in the debate who demanded the vindication of Gordon's memory in satisfaction of his wife's petition. How he can suppose I meant to defend Adderley or the present Government, I cannot imagine, inasmuch as I answered Adderley in debate, and at Bradford began my speech by confining it to my reasons for agreeing with Cardwell, first in recalling Eyre, and next in not prosecuting him. This reminds me of one of our West Riding Liberal electioneers, who, when charged with making an unfounded attack on a Tory, said, 'Any stone was good enough to throw at a blue dog.' A

fortiori, Goldwin Smith may think a Liberal Under-Secretary good enough to throw at his Tory successor. Again, he says that the most violent theories on martial law say that its jurisdiction is limited by necessity. On the contrary, every lawyer I have seen tells me that it is limited, not by the actual necessity, but, to use Cardwell's words, quoted from his law adviser in his despatch, 'by the belief of the governor, reasonably entertained, that they were necessary.' Here lies the whole pinch of the matter. I think that Eyre, using his reason as best he could, did entertain the belief that the acts he committed and sanctioned were necessary. Undoubtedly these acts were not necessary, and to our judgment were unreasonable, or rather the reasons which weighed with Eyre and almost all the other whites in the island are to our minds altogether insufficient. But surely it is not fair to put a man in the position of governor not by law, but by his belief in necessity, and then to prosecute him because he acted according to such belief? It appears to me that when once we admit that Eyre was justified in declaring martial law, which means in abolishing law, we take his acts out of the province of law, and therefore of prosecution, unless we can show them to have been reckless or malicious. We can recall him as unfit; we can censure him as a fool; but we have no right to punish him as a criminal; for his reply would be, 'You say I did right in putting my discretion in place of law; you allow that these acts against which you complain were acts of discretion; you say that these acts were in themselves bad. Well, then, you have a right to recall and censure me, as unfit for my place and as governing badly; but you have no right to punish me as a criminal, for doing, after all, what I thought to be my duty.' . . . Well, then, what I think ought to be done, and what I did my best to do, is not prosecute the governor for bad government in the exercise of his discretion, but (1) recall him; (2) prosecute every one against whom there is *prima facie* evidence of bad faith; (3) take care that no future governor be in Eyre's position. . . . Send me back Goldwin Smith's letter. It is personally civil; only tells me I am a fool, not a rogue or official hack. Heaven knows the position of an under-secretary, with his chief in the Commons, was not so desirable that I was tempted to sell the negro to retain it! The temptation (and I felt it) was the other way—to seize a good excuse for getting out. But I do not much mind the sneers about office, of which there are enough from others. There are not many things for which I cannot reproach myself, but the not having a constant,

anxious, painful desire to do my duty to the negro and Jamaica during my six months at the Colonial Office is not one of them.

It was the reform question, however, which absorbed that session of 1866, during which he first occupied a seat on the Treasury Bench. Needless to say, there were discussions in the Ministry as well as outside of it. Forster's influence within the Government was always used on the side of the reformers.

To his Wife.

“Colonial Office, January 11th, 1866.

“I wish I could find time to write thee fully ; but it is not easy to do so. I have delivered my mind on reform. I spoke strongly yesterday to De Grey, Cardwell, and Gibson, telling them I believed the Government and the Reform Bill would fall from want of substance, with the £6 rating, and that if they were to be upset they had better be upset on *something*. Gibson told me nothing had been decided on, but quite wished me to see Johnny (Lord Russell). So I wrote him the accompanying note to-day, to which he appointed to see me at 1.45, just before the Cabinet meeting. He received me very cordially, for him, and told me nothing had been fixed. Cardwell sent down to me this morning to come up to an interview which would have interested you. Seymour, the new Governor of British Columbia, with Sir E. Head, discussing the union of British Columbia and Vancouver's Island, and their new constitution. Certainly the colonial business is intensely interesting, and I have no wish to change it for the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade.”

To his Wife.

“I have had an interesting day. I went with Gibson to Gladstone at ten, and talked hard with him till almost twelve. He was very free and cordial, and let me talk as much as he lets any one ; but he does as much of the talking as Johnny does little. I went over the reform question with him, up and down, and I think he really took in what I said.”

During the course of the session he spoke in the House of Commons on the Government bill, and was strenuous in his defence of the ministerial proposals. The defeat and resignation of Lord Russell transferred the reform battle from the floor of Parliament to the country. Mr. Forster gave up his

place at the Colonial Office to Mr. Adderley, Lord Derby having become Prime Minister, and regained his old position of independence.

He did not fail to make use of it during the autumn, which was a period of almost continuous agitation. The hero of the agitation was undoubtedly Mr. Bright. The member for Birmingham, disgusted by the intrigues which had brought about the defeat of the honest measure of Lord Russell, left the House declaring that he would appeal to the country against its decision, and call in the grand council of the nation to overrule the declarations of Parliament. He kept his promise in a remarkable way. The series of great demonstrations in favour of a radical measure of reform which took place during the autumn, and at which Mr. Bright was the principal speaker, stand out in lonely pre-eminence among all similar movements of recent times. Never were demonstrations better organized; never were they more successful in arousing the enthusiasm of the community, and never were they more effective in bringing about the desired end. The summer in London had been a stormy one in a political sense. The attempt on the part of Ministers to prevent a meeting of working men in Hyde Park had been hotly resented by the democratic leaders of the metropolis. The mob had successfully defied the police, and a great defeat had been inflicted upon the authorities. There were fears among the more timid spirits in London of a period of revolutionary disturbance; and when Mr. Bright began the great agitation of the autumn he was sharply rebuked, not merely by the Tory members, but by some of the more prominent organs of the Whig party, as a person whose action was a danger to the peace of the commonwealth. Yet never was an agitation of this description more entirely legitimate in its methods as well as in its aims.

Whether it was at Birmingham, at Manchester, at Leeds, at Glasgow, or in London, the reform demonstration was always carried on upon the same lines. During the afternoon of the day fixed for it a great mass meeting was held in the open air at some convenient spot. Thousands and tens of thousands of working-men, anxious to proclaim their determination to win admission within the pale of the Constitution, marched in procession to the appointed place of meeting. There they were divided by their marshals into three or four distinct groups, and each group being gathered round a platform of its own, was addressed by its own special speaker. At a given moment the speaking ceased, and a resolution demanding the introduction of a Reform Bill was carried by

the whole of the vast multitude. Then, having accomplished their part of the task, the working-men returned in peace and order to their own homes. On the evening of the same day a public meeting was held in the largest hall available for the purpose, and at this meeting Mr. Bright was invariably the principal speaker. Those who, like the present writer, heard the whole series of speeches delivered by Mr. Bright in 1866 can never forget the impression which he produced by his impassioned pleading on behalf of the nation without votes, and by his strenuous denunciation of the treachery and cowardice of those who, wearing the Liberal uniform, had in the last session betrayed the Liberal cause. Steadily and certainly the tide of public opinion swelled higher and higher in favour of reform, and before Mr. Bright completed the great task which he had set himself, it was known to everybody that Ministers had no choice but to accept the verdict of the country.

One of the greatest of these demonstrations was that which was held on October 8th, at Leeds. The men of the West Riding were of course among the foremost of those who demanded the enlargement of the franchise, and Mr. Bright had an enthusiastic reception from his Yorkshire friends. But those who were present on the occasion recall the fact that even the reception accorded to Mr. Bright did not exceed in its enthusiasm that which was enjoyed by the member for Bradford. Mr. Forster spoke not merely in the Town Hall at the evening meeting, but from one of the waggons which served as platforms at the great gathering on Woodhouse Moor. And here one may remark, in parenthesis, that no public man of his time was ever less of a stickler for his own dignity than Mr. Forster. Those who have had any experience in organizing public meetings, especially meetings of the character of this reform demonstration at Leeds, cannot be ignorant of the difficulties thrown in their way by the anxiety of rival politicians to get the best positions for themselves, and above all to do nothing which may seem to the outside world to be derogatory to their position in public life. At that time it was undoubtedly believed by most persons that no man who had attained any position in Parliament ought to speak at one of these open-air meetings. The speaking there was left almost entirely in the hands of the leaders of the working classes, and of ardent local Radicals. Mr. Bright, for example, always kept aloof from these open-air gatherings, although his name was the most potent influence in bringing them together. Mr. Forster had ceased to be

a mere independent member. He enjoyed the reputation and authority belonging to an ex-Minister, and he might well have excused himself in the circumstances from speaking at the open air demonstration at Leeds. But he saw an opportunity for usefulness, and he was only too glad to avail himself of it. He spoke, therefore, on Woodhouse Moor, as well as at the evening meeting which was addressed by Mr. Bright, and he was the only man of his position in political life who, during that autumn agitation, took this course. Those who remember this fact can understand how it was that even Mr. Bright did not receive a more enthusiastic welcome in Leeds than that which was given to Mr. Forster.

In his speech at the evening meeting there was one passage which deserves to be quoted, as it was something more than a shrewd guess at the subsequent course of events: "They were all determined, whatever their theories might be, to work hard and unitedly, until they had forced the Government of the day, whatever that Government might be, to bring forward a really practical Reform Bill. He said the Government of the day, because he was not one of those who wished to lay it down as utterly impossible that the present Government could bring forward a satisfactory Reform Bill. They had a right to look upon that Government with the utmost possible suspicion, remembering, as they did, that such men as General Peel and Lord Cranborne, who had declared themselves opposed to all concessions to the working classes, were leading members of the Government, and that their supporters were the two hundred and odd members who had cheered Mr. Lowe when he calumniated the working classes. But they must not forget that they had a man of very great talent as their leader in the House of Commons, a man who marked the signs of the times and knew well what ought to be done. Mr. Disraeli had obtained notoriety by fastening upon Sir Robert Peel, because he sacrificed his party to that which he believed to be the good of his country in the repeal of the corn laws. It was not impossible that Mr. Disraeli might intend to close his career by striving to copy Sir Robert Peel in making such a sacrifice. They might be quite sure that neither Mr. Disraeli nor any one else, and even less Mr. Disraeli than any other man, because they remembered the bill he brought forward before, would have the slightest chance of settling that question if he did not bring forward a more liberal bill than Mr. Gladstone's, a greater concession to the public rights. They must judge whatever measure was brought forward by its merits, and it mattered little who it came from, whether

from old friends or from old foes; but he was quite sure that such demonstrations as they had had that day had made it utterly impossible that it would not soon be settled."

A few weeks later Mr. Forster delivered his annual address to his constituents, and devoted himself almost exclusively to the question of reform. There were still, it must be remembered, those on the Liberal side who, if not opposed to any extension of the franchise, were at all events filled with apprehension at the thought that some sweeping measure of reform might be introduced which would practically confer votes upon the whole of the working classes. Mr. Forster devoted himself in his speech to the task of combating the fears of such persons. An old advocate of manhood suffrage, though he had learned from experience to limit his aspirations, he was still bent upon obtaining the utmost possible concession from those in authority. He declared that it would no longer be possible to bring forward a bill so limited and moderate as that of Lord Russell, and he besought all classes of Liberals to unite in securing a real and honest measure of reform. He held up before those whom he addressed the American Constitution, with its freedom and its broad foundation, as an example of what might be accomplished if the leaders of the nation were willing to give the fullest possible extension of its liberties; "and yet further," he added, "it is in our power to outstrip America in the race. There are possibilities of freedom, not only under our beloved Monarch, but, whoever be the occupant of the throne, under our Constitutional Limited Monarchy, which there are not under their suddenly changing presidents; and I will go further and admit, nay, I will affirm, that our nobility can bring to the service of their country a power of usefulness, as many of them have done, greater than where there is no class with leisure for high culture and for the acquisition of varied knowledge of men and things. But whatever may be our advantages, whatever may be the disadvantages of America, America will beat us in the race for freedom, if for much longer millions of Englishmen are forced to feel themselves deprived of their citizenship; aliens in the land of their birth, because they have not those rights which the history of their country teaches them ought to be theirs. Let us, then, all join together in this great and good work of turning those aliens into citizens; let capitalists and labourers, employers and employed, throw away their jealousies and suspicions and help in this work. I fully believe that, in as far as they perform it, they will find their reward, in discovering that even those jealousies and suspicions

will melt away and cease to exist. Ay! and let our ancient aristocracy, casting behind them their foolish fears of the people, and remembering how in former days their fathers fought and strove for their and our freedom, also join us in this work, and in this goodly enterprise take their natural place as leaders of the people."

Such words as these were very gratifying to the ardent Liberals of Bradford; and yet already there were the first signs of a little rift within the lute so far as the relations between Mr. Forster and his constituents were concerned. At the close of this speech he was taken to task because of his action with regard to Governor Eyre, and from that time forward there was always in Bradford a certain number of men who regarded him with suspicion, not because they could find in any single instance any betrayal of principle on his part, but because as a responsible minister of the Crown he was not at all times ready to lend his aid in securing what they believed to be the natural fruits of those principles which they and he held in common.

The session of 1867 witnessed the great surrender of the Tory party on the question of reform, and the passing of the Household Suffrage Bill, with which the name of Mr. Disraeli will always be associated. Forster took an active part, not merely in the debates in the House, but in the private conferences of the Liberal party in regard to the measure. Whilst the bill was still in a state of transition in the House of Commons, he received the following letter from Lord Russell—a document which would seem to justify the friends of the great Whig statesman in claiming for him the merit of having proposed a real household suffrage before Mr. Disraeli himself resorted to it.

To MR. FORSTER.

"Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park,
"April 25th, 1867.

"DEAR MR. FORSTER,

"I agree with you that Gladstone's amendment having been thrown out, the struggle of reformers ought to be to obtain a real household suffrage without personal payment of rates. The present Bill gives not, indeed, a hard and fast line, but a line fluctuating between £8 or £9 for the compound householder, and £1 or £3 for the poor man whose rates are paid by the election agent. . . .

"Yours truly,
"RUSSELL."

Writing in 1885 to the Rev. W. Heaton, Leeds, Forster thus explained the circumstances under which the above letter was addressed to him. He himself had from the first favoured household suffrage pure and simple, whilst the object of Mr. Gladstone and the other official Liberals had been to get rid of ratepaying restrictions and to secure a £5 franchise. Mr. Gladstone had, however, been defeated on his first amendment, and Forster then urged upon Lord Russell the importance of a united movement in favour of household suffrage. The result of Lord Russell's letter was a conference of Liberal leaders, at which it was resolved to support household suffrage pure and simple, and in the end this was won from the Tory Government.

During the autumn Mr. Forster's usual holiday trip took the shape of a tour down the Danube to Constantinople and Asia Minor. It was his first peep at the East, and it made a deep impression upon him. The following extracts from his letters describe the more interesting portions of his tour. His companion on this, as on a former occasion, was Mr. John Ball.

“ Hotel d'Angleterre, Pera,

“ Tuesday evening, October 1st, 1867.

“ Here we are in great comfort, having arrived this morning about half-past ten. Just after writing my last letter from the Danube steamer, I found I had misdated it Saturday, the 28th, instead of Sunday, the 29th. We left the steamer at Rustchuk about half-past twelve that night, and found clean beds in a small railway hotel kept by a German, and by help of encompassing myself with my dear plaid I kept tolerably warm. At a quarter to eight the next morning we were off by the Varna railway, which, though advertised for every day, only runs two or three times a week, and would vastly move the contempt of the boys. It is an English company, and it was strange to see the rough practical Englishmen among the dignified Turks and wild savage Bulgarians, both equally lazy, and the little stone stations among the Bulgarian mud huts. It was a savage ride over a spur of the Balkan; the country burnt up, the trees, or rather brushwood, with leaves changed or gone from the sun and snow; no enclosures, and hardly a town, but villages like beaver-huts, herds of buffaloes, and every now and then long trains of arabas (wicker waggons), bound with country produce to some market, in single file along the unmade tracks, or gipsy-like encampments bivouacking round the carts. There was no hotel either at Varna or

on the road, but a restaurant in the train, from which we got cold mutton and cheese, and good Varna wine and excellent grapes. It was very cold till we got over the Balkans, but then much milder, though we heard there had been snow at Varna. . . . H— says Achmet has hope in his country, having hope in himself, but no one else has. The sense of doom is over the land. The Sultan is morose, obstinate, childish in his extravagance, half enraged and half frightened at the sense of danger, from which his ignorance no longer shields him. His ministers, Fuad and Company, are either incompetent or clever only for their own corrupt interests. Of Fuad especially I hear the worst stories. The few faithful adherents of the Sultan, his personal servants, ask in helpless resignation what is to become of them. The Greeks are all actively and cleverly intriguing, and—most ominous sign of all—the Turkish people are getting enough knowledge to feel and hate their bad government, and to wish for any change, even for a Christian rule, which would make them hewers of wood and drawers of water, like the Tartars in Russia. It is sad to see a people under its doom.”

Mr. Forster and Mr. Ball determined to journey overland from Broussa to Smyrna; then, as now, a somewhat perilous expedition, owing to the character of the inhabitants of the country. The first adventure which Mr. Forster had was in climbing Mount Olympus, and an account of it will be found in the following correspondence:—

“October 12th.

“Well, at last, my dearest, my wish for a purely Eastern scene may be said to be satisfied. Time: a quarter-past seven p.m.; moonlight outside; two tallow candles within. Scene: a large square room, with a Turkey carpet and a cushioned divan; no chairs or tables; the village priest with his white turban and long beard squatted on one side; self in the corner scribbling; near me the son of my host, Sadih Oghi Mehemet Aga, the rich man of the place, to whom I am sent by the conjoint conspiracy of the governor or sous-prefet of the town and of the consul, who gave me a letter of introduction. Next to the son, Antonia, and next to him my kavass, a *beau ideal* of a Bashi-bazouk, fierce enough in all conscience, but not bad-looking. A few minutes ago you might have seen us at the supper of the house: a cloth spread upon a stool in a corner of the divan; upon that an old round salver, not badly ornamented, and then a succession of dishes—soup and

onion salad, curd and some vegetable, some mess of Indian corn with sugar, very good, finishing with pilau and a dessert of grapes and water melon. I was furnished with my own plate and spoon, but every one else, priest included, dug into the dish with spoon or hands;—not every one else, only the gentility, for a tall Nubian, the slave of the house, was holding the candle, grinning with great glee, and my Bashi-bazouk was also practising waiting in order to enjoy the fun.

“But where is Ball?” you will ask. Alas! this morning he said that, after much pondering, he was most reluctantly compelled to believe that he ought not to go further into the interior, his chest giving threats of his old complaint, from which he has had two really dangerous attacks of inflammation of the lungs. I had great doubt whether to return with him and give up Kutaya, but I decided to go on. My health is good, and I have complete confidence in Antonio, and probably I shall never again have such a chance of gratifying two longings—really seeing and feeling the East, and travelling in untravellered lands. Had Ball to return to Constantinople by himself I should not have hesitated to go with him, but he returns with the Powells, and will therefore be in better care than mine.

“We all started together at eight this morning, and about ten we parted, they making for Missihour on their way to Nicea, and I skirting the spurs of Olympus, through wooded glens to this my first sleeping-place, meeting train after train with camels loaded with grain, with the camel-driver on his donkey at their head. We passed through only one village, Aksa (White Water), where we baited, stopping at a Turkish café. The inmates were vastly interested, almost excited, by my making my beef tea in my Rob Roy *cuisine*. Tell darling Flo that all my dodges came into play. My mattress and indiarubber rug were invaluable in the tent, and will, I expect, be very welcome to-night for the couch of my good host; and I regularly use both bath and basin. My party are my kavass; as I said, one of the pasha’s Bashi-bazouks, a riding armoury, with a double-barrelled gun, a long sword and a dagger, and two pistols, and his charges of powder encircling him; our surragee, a pleasant Armenian, recommended by the American missionary, leading the baggage-horse, five horses in all. My steed, a sweet-expressed light bay pony, hardly up to my weight, but doing its best. Our journey to-day was about eight hours’ actual riding, from thirty to thirty-five miles. The country parched, but naturally very rich; almost entirely uncultivated. The camel trains and the bullocks and

buffaloes dragging the springless carts feeding where they or their drivers pleased. We saw some goats and sheep, but horses and cows seemed the wealth of the peasants. Close to this village we came upon hundreds of them driven by one lame keeper. On entering the village we rode straight to the governor's house. Antonio strode up to present my firman, and soon I followed, making my way through guards and prisoners in chains. The village despot was a fat, bloated Turk, with blue spectacles, who after long spelling through the firman, or making attempts thereat, for I do not believe any one as yet has actually read it, received me most graciously, giving us coffee and cigarettes (I did my duty to them manfully), and ordering hospitality to be provided for us. Of course this might be a great oppression, but I hope I shall make it a pleasure to my hosts."

"Sunday, 4 p.m., Bazardjik.

"Governor's house—of which I have taken possession—a large mud hovel, its only furniture a divan bench in the room and two wooden chairs. Antonio is much shocked, but I am so well prepared that all I want is a clean-swept uncarpeted room, which I see I can get if allowed to condescend to it; and I am now quite happy thinking of thee and of you all, and glowing after a head and foot wash in my two basins, a somewhat perilous undertaking, as I feared the arrival of his Excellency and my introduction to him during the process. Out of the window I think I see the governor, with his black slave behind him, and Antonio is gone out, so I am speechless to explain.

"Tuesday, October 15th, Kutayah (*Kossuth's residence*).—The approach of the governor was a false alarm, but Antonio soon arrived, saying I must be off to look at some ruins, of which he had tidings from a Greek (Antonio's zeal in ruin hunting is intense, as becomes a native of Eleusis), near Salamis; and away we trudged about three-quarters of an hour to the north, where we found traces of an old town in brick and marble, and excavations, and one long broken column. As we returned through the fields, where the camels were grazing with their packs on their backs, we met the governor, who came to see after us—a young Turk, fat and jovial, and most hospitable. He and Antonio insisted on parading me round the village, escorted by the oldest inhabitants, to see every inscription and column or slab by lantern-light, till I regretted the rash excuse I had given for my journeyings, that I was a ruin seeker. After that we had

a merry dinner. The governor, only a sub-governor after all, dosing me with mastic, helping me to pull a chicken to pieces, drinking my wine, greatly amused at my tea-making, and liking it well flavoured with cognac, and last of all making my bed, which he insisted on spreading under his divan.

“Yesterday morning we were off by seven, sending on the luggage with the kavass, and riding with the governor and a well-to-do Turk of the place to see some other ruins to the south. There is, after all, a melancholy strangeness to feel that there may be traces of an old city in any thicket or thistle field. This delayed us two hours, but the governor insisted on escorting us till we overtook our luggage, about eleven, at a guard-house in a lovely fresh ravine, just as we turned south up the mountains, and we had a parting repast on bread and grapes, I giving my share of bread to the pony to comfort him for the extra labour of ruin hunting. Our road then was up a high wooded hill on to the central platform, upon which we shall now be for days, with mountains indeed interspersed, but nowhere under two thousand five hundred feet; a wild austere country, with enormous forests on its skirts, and desert-looking moors in the interior. We found ourselves obliged to stop about three o'clock at Turturhar, a mountain village, nearly four thousand feet high, of log huts and one or two mud cottages. Here we had to rough it. A room in the coffee shop was swept out for me, and after a walk up a neighbouring hill, wearing my loaded pistol, and supping on my own soup and beef tea and a thrush that Said, the kavass, had shot, I tried to write, but gave it up, there being neither table, bench, nor chair, and went to bed on my rug and mattress, wrapping them round me to save me from the fleas. As yet I have been saved. I found none at either Agnegol or the governor's, and last night my precautions were effectual, not only casing myself in indiarubber, but putting all my clothes in my large bath. Antonio said he found thousands, and the kavass signified the same to me by vigorous scratches.

“We were up about half-past three, and off by half-past five—it takes a long time to get off—and reached this type of a Turkish town about half-past two. The approach to it is very striking; an enormous ruined castle climbing the long range of scarred limestone hills which faced us, and the town, with its trees and mosques, resting under it with a look of beauty sadly belied by the dirty streets, which are, however, rather above the average of Turkish towns. Two or three miles from the town we met a procession, characteristic but

touching. Two Bashi-bazouks, driving before them two prisoners, an old man on horseback chained to a fine-looking youth; walking by their side two women in white veils and cloaks, one of them, probably the youth's mother, helping him to bear the heavy burden of his chain, and an old man, probably his father, riding at their head on a donkey. And so they trudged on slowly and silently, bound, I suppose, to Broussa, or perhaps to Stamboul.

"We rode all through the streets of the town to the governor's konak, a large building with pretentious steps, with an enormous hall filled with servants and armed men. We were ushered into a waiting-room, where squatted a secretary on his bench before his table, and waited till Antonio thought that my dignity required that the pasha should be sent for. Happily, however, he came, a most dignified and courteous old gentleman, who led me up a large long staircase to a spacious divan, holding my hand all the time, where we did fine speeches, coffee, and cigarettes for the due time—not short, I can assure you—and then with the pasha's approval, rooms were ordered for us at an Armenian merchant's, Stephen Aga, to whom I had also a letter from the consul. Nothing can exceed the hospitality of the old gentleman; cups of mastic or the best raki; pieces of delicious water-melon, brought to me at the end of a fork; an excellent dinner, with very good wine. The squire of the place, Emis Effendi, with whom I have formed an everlasting friendship, asked to meet me, and his three sons waiting on us at dinner, and now a clean-looking couch waiting for me to get into it, and I think I must go to it, my dearest, for I am tired enough, with little or no sleep last night—with travelling, and, not least of all, with having so constantly to keep up my company manners and try to make up for want of speech by attention of bearing and gestures. I am, however, in perfect health, and look forward to a prosperous arrival at Smyrna about this day week. I fear it will be impossible to do so before. I hear the weekly post leaves this place for Stamboul to-morrow, so I shall risk sending it to the care of the British postmaster to forward. . . .

"6 a.m., *Wednesday*.—Antonio has lighted my candle, and I finish my note from my couch, for this mansion, though it boasts a very small table, has no chair. My night has been—for this land of floor beds and howling dogs and shrieking Arabs—very good, and we are off about eight for the ruins of Azain, and then *viâ* Ghed to Ushah, Kula, Philadelphia, and Sardis to Cassaba, where we take rail for Smyrna, where I

hope to find Ball and the P——s and thy dear letters, and I trust a telegram. I am sorry to say I lose my kavass here—an old Crimean soldier of fifty, with the eye and glee of a boy—the pasha wishing to give me one of his own; but I take on my good, honoured Broussa surragedee, and my pony, of whom I am quite fond, and I find Antonio very able, attentive, and pleasant.”

“House of Hadji Ibrahim Effendi.

“*Thursday evening, October 17th.*—Would that I could describe to thee my entrance to this mansion, up a hill steeper than Haworth, between narrow lanes, escorted by the governor’s armed but barefooted servant to a large wooden house; up the steps, in an upstairs hall with a large bow window, but with no glass, was the principal divan, and standing on the carpet were two tall Turks, both with long white beards, one with a drab, the other with a blue fur pelisse. They received me with stately welcome. I take off my shoes and curl myself on the divan as best I may, and a slow and solemn talk ensues. When very hard pressed, I try one of my dodges—the never-failing wonder of my bath, or my *cuisine*, or my alpenstock. But this time my revolver, spectacles, and opera-glass sufficed. My present host is, in a dignified fashion, inquisitive. ‘How much do I get a month from my Government as a member of Parliament?’ The explanation that I am chosen by the people to assist the Queen not satisfactory. ‘How many children have I?’ ‘None.’ ‘Why am I so foolish as not to take many wives?’ ‘I love my wife too much.’ ‘I have adopted four children—children of my wife’s brother.’ All very unsatisfactory. In the midst of inquiries a sudden pause, and my host and his brother say their prayers, kneeling on the divan towards Mecca, and kissing the ground many times. I sit silent, with my head bowed, which evidently produces a favourable impression. Dinner follows, and I bravely abstain from fork or plate or any Western aid, and stick to my one wooden spoon and my fingers, with which I pull out my roast meat; but then, after dinner, comes a slave with soap and water and a napkin. Then comes another solemn talk, assisted by one or two notorieties of the town, until about a quarter-past seven. Antonio, much oppressed with his interpreting duties, suggests bed, but not before I was fully posted with the question, ‘What present did our Queen give the Sultan?’ On the whole, however, I got off well, and besides the usual shower of compliments, have the special one of ‘pleasure to see me, because I am so quiet and gentlemanly.’ All this is at first

amusing, and gives much insight into life ; but I begin to long for the relaxation of an inn. Seeing no women gives a very strange feeling. At Kutaya I only saw the daughter of my host for a moment, looking at the stranger from a side door as I drove off. The Bazardjik governor had no wife or harem ; but in the other abodes there has been no trace whatever of womankind, either in sight or hearing.

“My rides, both yesterday and to-day, have been most interesting. After a breakfast on excellent Turkish cream and sugar we left Kutaya about nine o'clock, climbing a narrow ravine to a height of nearly five thousand feet, and then through scanty sprinklings of pine and cyprus and forest trees of the brightest autumn tints, crossing one dried-up valley after another, with much cultivation, but seemingly no cultivators, till we looked down upon a large plain or basin, seemingly a sandy desert, but really parched up cornfields (they have had no rain for five months), surrounded by ranges of mountains with steep sides and round peaks, wooded, if you examine them, but looking austere and arid, and in the midst, some eight or ten miles off, a green oasis of trees ; the few huts—hardly visible—of the village on the site of the great city of Azani, and standing up in solitary grandeur the grand Temple of Jupiter. We reached Azani about four, and I had a most memorable walk by myself, first to the temple and then to the enormous hippodrome and amphitheatre, and, sitting on the royal seat looking down the theatre and stadium upon the gloriously beautiful pillars of the temple in the still autumn evening, with the solemn hills encircling me, I felt as though I learned the lesson of the emptiness of man's fuss as I never had before. Coming back, I went to a well where some women were hoisting, by a rude wooden crane, out of a beautifully sculptured circlet, a wooden tub of water. I went with my horn to get some. They ran away, huddling up their faces, and when I left, returned, laughing in scorn, and one of them, I think, sent a stone after the infidel. We were, however, most hospitably received by the owner of the best house in the place ; poor enough, but not without attempts at real comfort, and built, I heard, solely to receive strangers, his own house and harem being behind. Antonio and I this morning took a careful survey of the ruins. There are sixteen columns of the temple still standing, ten feet in circumference and about thirty feet high, and some of the cornices are hardly touched. The walls and seats and doors of the theatre are some of them wonderfully perfect. For the third time since I have been in Asia I saw perched on them many storks,

attracted, I suppose, by the river Ryndacus, not quite dried up.

"We started about ten, and after a scorchingly hot ride among really grand mountains, making the pass which divides the watershed between the Black Sea and the Archipelago, resting our horses and taking coffee at a guard-house in a pine forest, we reached this place about four o'clock—an Asiatic Yeadon, which looks as though it might burn down in an hour, as I hear Ushah, our next sleeping-place—where the best carpets are made—was burnt down a few weeks ago.

"*Sunday, October 20th.*—Would that I had not lost all describing power, for really some of the scenes I have witnessed are worth describing. For instance, about eleven, in the fierce heat, we came to the mud village of Kuneh, up a very steep mound. We trot to the governor's office—a covered mud balcony. The governor is not in. Antonio wishes to send on a kavass to prepare a sleeping-place for the great 'Bey Ingeleez,' and to quicken the natives, storms and stamps his feet. Meantime a cushion is spread in the corner of the balcony, upon which his beyship reclines in sublime patience, as though utterly indifferent whether or no he spends the rest of his days at Kuneh. Patience is rewarded by a cup of good black coffee, which always springs most unaccountably out of the mud. Antonio produces a cold chicken, and while gnawing it, I hear guns. 'What are they, Antonio?' 'Villagers coming back from the tomb of a khalif, where they have been praying for rain.' Soon they appear, horse and foot, the men armed with matchlocks and swords, and one or two veiled women, and under my mound they gallop round their horses and discharge their guns as though at one another, and dance one couple and another in a ring, wildly but gracefully; and some of them come up to the balcony and squat round the stranger, and look like pleased children through my opera-glass. They may well long for rain. This white granite and black basalt and volcanic country is burnt up like a desert; the dust on the fields deep as sand; the underwood generally as though a fire had swept over it; the watercourses dried up. Imagine, then, the beauty of coming to a river too strong for the drought, the Hermus, with green banks and green oak-trees overhanging them, and the flocks of the Turcomans sleeping or grazing on them—beautiful white sheep, and glossy black, or white, or grey goats. The Turcomans roam, Bedouin-like, over this country, and seem to me rich in pastoral wealth of horses and cows, and goats and sheep, and some of them a few camels. While baiting at a guard-house on Friday,

between Ghediz and Ushah, I went into one of their black tents, not without signs of comfort in curled-up carpets and beds; the women not veiled, and a big, strapping, handsome girl had a tame partridge-looking bird in a cage. The Bashi-bazouks on guard begged us to go to look at one of their number, himself a Turcoman, who had been ill for seven months. We found the poor fellow stretched in his small tent, with his wife and mother and handsome son attending him. I satisfied myself he was not ill of ague or fever, and, so far as I could make out, rhubarb might do him good, and could do him no harm. So I left him eight rhubarb pills, and half a lira and some bread, and we promised to intercede with the governor of Ushah to send him to the baths of Broussa, taking his boy on with us for an answer. The Ushah governor was at first rather surly, a most rare occurrence; so I am proportionally dignified, waiting till the firman thawed him, which it did so as to give me hope for the poor Turcoman. He was sitting or squatting in the seat of justice, and twelve prisoners, chained together, were being paraded before him. All brigands, he said; but I suspect villagers arrested in order to compel their villages to give a guarantee against brigandage. There certainly is more of this brigandage than I had supposed. We have an incident almost every day. Coming from Ajinhol we had to lengthen our route to avoid them. On getting near Bazaschzik, gravestones in the road betokened men killed by them, and the next day I was shown the wayside grave of a 'fuge,' as Antonio called him, but it was ten years since his murder. The prisoner procession I met near Kutaya turned out to be a robber family, who had been caught after murdering a traveller, and I found that the Ghediz governor was right in warning me off the Mischan road, as only ten days ago many hundred Bashi-bazouks had been out against a band in a village close to it, and after losing three of their own number, had killed three of the robbers, but let seven escape. In fact, the robbers seem to me much the finest fellows going. The chief of the band, like Liftar, the Nico-median chief, did not murder, but plundered or ransomed the rich to help the poor. Lifta, whose name was in every one's mouth at Broussa and Constantinople, is said to have married scores of girls to poor youths, paying their dower for them. You will say I ought to have kept off this robber-country; but with a clever, resolute man like Antonio I do not believe there is real danger; and, besides, both H—— and Achmet Effendi and the Broussa pasha told us we might safely venture. There was a brigand chief in the Broussa district, by name

Manioli, who really was dangerous; but the new pasha had made an active onslaught on his band, and had forced it to disperse, and Manioli himself had escaped a few days ago in a boat across the Sea of Marmora.

“I should not send thee all these robber stories were it not that this letter cannot leave till after my safe arrival at Smyrna, and my journal would not be complete without them; so I may as well make a clean breast of it, and mention an incident on Mount Olympus which might have been serious, but fortunately had no result. The governor had offered us two kavasses for the ascent, but we hardly thought he meant it seriously, and so took none, as they would have been an intolerable nuisance; and, besides, the consul told us that the small robber band which had infested the mountain had disappeared, and I believe Ball laughed at me in his mind because I would wear my revolver. I told you I went up the mountain by myself (from the point usually reached to the real top, about an hour's walk higher). Near the highest peak, about eight thousand feet high, I saw a man trudging quickly after me. At first I thought he must be Ball; but it turned out to be a native, with his pistol in his belt and a stick, or rather small log of wood, on his shoulder. He talked, or rather shouted, at me, and I shouted in return, as friendly as I could, but keeping my hand on my pistol, which unfortunately was hidden in a case under my coat. I pointed to the peak by way of explanation of my movements, and he seemed to make for a path over the mountain side, but on scaling the summit I found my friend perched on it. I went straight up to him to offer my hand, and almost made him shake hands, which he did unwillingly, and began to talk threateningly, as though he wanted my alpenstock and my pistol, which I think he took for a dagger. Of course I understood nothing except this, that he uttered two or three times the word ‘Manioli,’ the name of the robber chief. I tried to keep him off, but in a very short time he drew his pistol, but did not present it. I immediately drew mine, and tried to make him see that it was a revolver. As, however, he showed no peaceful sign, I drew back my trigger to full cock, and heard him click his pistol. I then, thinking the matter serious, fired, not however aiming, my object being to show him I meant fight. My impression is that he then fired and bolted off a few steps. I fired again, and he bolted down the peak about fifty yards, and dodged behind a stone, so that I could only see the muzzle of his pistol. I dodged in like manner behind some stones on the crest of the peak, and after

this mutual dodging had lasted a short time he ran off as fast as his legs could carry him, leaving me in possession of his stick, which he had dropped. I took the height of the mountain with my aneroid, and then went back to the tents, walking as fast as in me lay, as, although he had gone off in a contrary direction, I did not feel sure he had not gone for comrades with whom to intercept me. The affair is somewhat unintelligible, and I am more thankful than I can say, not only that he did not hit me, but that I did not hit him. But, upon the whole, my interpretation agrees with the decided opinion of Antonio and other knowing ones, that he was not a professed brigand, or he would have acted more skilfully; but that, attracted by my watch, and thinking my pistol only a small dagger, he had hoped to rob me under fear of his pistol, and when he discovered the power of my pistol he had been greatly frightened.

“ Well, enough of robber stories. I hope to be in Smyrna the day after to-morrow, and I have greatly doubted whether to say anything about them. But in spite of our earnest efforts to keep this small adventure to ourselves, it may have got out, and of course, if at all, in an exaggerated form. I, of course thought it right to tell the consul, and he said he should tell the pasha; but to my great relief he agreed the next morning not to do so. The result might have been the arrest and punishment of numbers of innocent villagers—a measure quite in keeping with the miserable corrupt government of this country, which is unjust and debased beyond description. To return to my journal: I am now writing at Kula, the cleanest, brightest-looking town I have seen, built on a stream of lava, with a volcanic hill behind it, where we arrived after a short day's journey, giving me some hours' rest, of which I am glad, to get on with my letter, and also to mend up my throat, which is sore and swollen, I suppose parched up by the heat and dust. I am in luxury at the house of a Greek nephew of my host at Ushah, a rich merchant, whose hospitality was really unbounded and most delicate and homelike. His clean white divan, and dark wainscotted room, but with no windows, and the richness of his Turkey carpet (Ushah is the great place for carpets), and the magnificent silk coverlids to my couch, were sights to remember. The dear old man seemed to think it his duty to keep my candle alight. Waking about two, to my surprise I found it burning, and about an hour afterwards I caught him creeping in to light it again. I wish I had brought presents. I gave my old many-bladed knife to his son, a fine handsome youth, who waited on us at dinner, never sitting

down in his father's presence, and I managed to give a looking-glass to the old Turk at Ghediz, emboldened by request in the morning that I would let the harem see my opera-glass. I left the looking-glass for the harem; but I fear the old rascals will keep it to themselves, they seemed so pleased to gaze at their grizzly beards. They were rich landowners, and I rode through their property for miles on Friday. My possible presents are I fear exhausted, which I found provoking enough this morning, for where do you think I slept last night? At the house or rather but of Selim Bey, prince of some one thousand five hundred or two thousand wandering Turcomans. The Turcomans levy black-mail on the townsmen in old Highland fashion, of which fact I have had convincing proof; but he was proudly but truly hospitable, giving me good bed and board, and riding with me in the morning, armed with his gun and sword and pistol, to see me on my way. This seemed to be the fashion. My host at Ushah escorted me some way out of the town with quite a cavalcade with his son and two servants, all well mounted. In fact his horse was just the stout cob I should like to possess, and with his long black gown and fur pelisse he was a figure Walter Scott would have loved to describe. The horses here are very good. My little pony, not much bigger than Wixie, pulled with me this morning, having had no day's rest since Broussa, and a long day's journey, not short of ten hours, or close on forty miles yesterday.

“Salikly, October 21st.—We started early this morning, and reached here about one o'clock, trotting much of the way, crossing over a high hill down to the valley of Sardis, and leaving Philadelphia to the left. In spring this valley must be lovely; but at present it is a desert, though no heat can deprive the grand rocks and precipices of the long range of Mount Imolus on our left of their austere grandeur and solemn Eastern colouring. We start early to-morrow, and passing through Sardis hope to catch the Cassaba railway to Smyrna about one o'clock. I feel that I am hardly doing my duty in hurrying through Sardis and leaving Philadelphia to my left; but no ruin would tempt me to be longer than I can help from Smyrna and thy letters, and I trust Walter's telegram; and though in good case I might do much in the afternoons, the fact is that for two or three days I have been in great discomfort, not to say pain, with a throat really raw, and with either no voice at all or a voice as hoarse as a frog. I cannot help thinking it is the effect of the dry dust of these desert fields, and I have little doubt I shall get right when I get to the sea-breezes of Smyrna. Last night I found some ginger

in my tea really helpful. By-the-by, we persuaded the khanum, or mistress of the house, last evening to dine with us, a great victory, and she graciously accepted a cup of my tea. She made much of me, as with no voice I seemed ill, and I mourned again over my want of presents; but I think I pleased her as much by making Antonio tell her that she made me so comfortable it was like being at home; and in truth these two Greek houses are the only places in which I have found real comfort. To-night we are in a khan, of which I am glad, as it completes my experience, and I think I shall be tolerably comfortable now that I have had my room washed and swept out, and have spread my indiarubber rug over the cushions; but it is baking hot, and if this be their October, what must be their July?

“*Smyrna, October 24th.*—The P——s and Ball are gone to Ephesus, and I, though loth to miss it, am giving another day’s nurse to my throat and chest, which are really much better, so I have time to finish the journal of my ride. My last date was from the Salikly khan. May it be my only khan experience! I thought I had taken effectual precautions; but, alas! in vain; and at twelve I lighted my candle and, giving up sleep, watched my enemies. Antonio I found was in as bad a plight. So we kept the surragee and the kavass to their time, and were off by four, arriving at the mill at Sardis some time before break of day. This mill and a few scattered Turcoman huts are the only houses in the old Lydian city. We routed up the two young Greeks, tenants of the mill, and went off to the temple of Cybele, a mile or so up the Pactolus, which was not dried up. There are two massive columns left, and many on the ground. I made for an old citadel (Genoese, I suppose), which in the morning twilight seemed nearer than it was, and soon left Antonio hopelessly behind. The citadel was a climb of seven hundred or eight hundred feet, and was worth but little in itself. But the view I got of the whole place, though hurried, was striking. Probably there was no more fit mode of seeing this vast mass of ruin than by the clear morning light dawning on the misty valley of the Hermus, clearing the outline of the hills opposite, sharpening and richly colouring the picturesque route of the Pactolus vale, and disclosing the traces of one vast building after another, with the small shepherds’ huts among them.

“We were on our horses again before eight, and pushed on to Cassaba at full swing, not being quite certain of the time of the departure of the train, and so finished our ride at the Cassaba station a little before twelve. It was like waking

up from a fairy dream to find myself at a ticket office among English officials, and to be asked by a smoke-begrimed engineer, with an honest Yorkshire face, when I had left Yorkshire. But the return to everyday life was in truth a happy one, for I found a note from Ball stating that Walter's telegram, with 'Tout va bien,' had arrived. This was indeed a joyful ending of a ride I shall never forget. When I left Broussa I said I should aim at Tuesday for Smyrna, and so Ball, who with the P——s had been there some days, had come to Manisa (the old Magnesia), a station on the line, the night before, and had sent on a note saying he would return by this train, though he had hardly any expectation of finding me in it. There were two hours and a half before it left; so, after well hugging my good news, and taking affectionate leave of my surragee and dear little pony, backsheeshing the one with two lira, and the other with bread, I wandered into the town of Cassaba, and to much comfort found a Turkish bath. Ball duly met the train at the Manisa station, seeming really well. We got to Smyrna a little before six, steaming by its lovely bay, which struck me at sunset as one of the most beautiful views I had ever seen, and by half-past seven I was at the *table-d'hôte* of the Hôtel des deux Augustes, telling my story to the P——s and hearing theirs; but my throat so raw and my voice so hoarse, that I could scarcely speak. I fear my journal-letter will be almost past reading, but thou must first try to spell it out. My only excuse is that it was mainly written without table or chairs. I know scarcely anything of public matters. While in the interior of course I heard absolutely nothing, and here it is either no news or unbelievable *canards*. Yesterday I found myself close to the principal Greek school, and went over it, and found it a most excellent common school for both boys and girls. With all their faults I expect the future lies with the Greeks. It is still cloudless weather, though not quite so hot, and I am hopeful of a fine passage. Ball, who is now himself quite well, and who has been a capital caretaker of my throat, desires to be kindly remembered."

To his Daughters.

"Hôtel des deux Augustes,
"Smyrna, October 25th, 1867

'MY DARLING FLO AND FRANCIE,

"There are two mails from here to England, and so I am going to send a letter to you to race with one to mother. Yours will go up the Adriatic to Trieste, and then over the Alps. Mother's will go across the Mediterranean to

Marseilles. Yours goes first, this evening, and we go with it to Syra. My other starts on Monday; but will, I suspect, catch yours up. Now, first tell mother, in case this reaches you first, that I think I have all her dear letters but one, that by Trieste on the 14th, which I hope will come to-day before we leave. Tell her also that the Marseilles mail will bring her a long letter, the continuation of the journal of my ride across the country of about three hundred and fifty miles on my dear little pony Portakal (Turkish for Orange). He was so little, my feet were hardly a foot off the ground, and very slight also; but well bred, and he did not seem as though he could get tired. I was the only one of our party who did not ride with spurs, or with the sharp Turk stirrups, which are used as spurs, and he was always willing to break into a trot or a canter; and sometimes, after ambling on for miles, our Bashi-bazouk used to flourish his gun and we wave our whips, and away we went at a gallop, baggage-horse and all. The baggage-horse was a good horse, but with a bad character, having a bite or kick ready for every one but me. But I do not blame him, for every one but me was always aggravating him with shouting in his ear or giving him a hit over his hind-quarters. I told you about the Constantinople dogs in my first letter. As I saw more of them, I found them more unpleasant, more mangy and dirty, but they have curious ways of their own. They belong to nobody, but they divide the city into wards, and if a strange dog comes into a ward not his own, all the natives rush out at him from every hole and corner, and amid barks and howls indescribable drive him away. I am sure, if they were well treated, they would be very nice dogs, something like our shepherd dogs. A Yorkshire engine-driver I found at Cassaba had trained one, and he was as faithful and knowing as any English dog. Did I tell you of the bear I started on Mount Olympus? I roused him pretty close; but only just caught sight of a bit of him, and a little time afterwards saw him running on the edge of the mountain. I could not tell what he was. I never thought of a bear, and he was too clumsy for a deer; but I came upon his footsteps and when I described them I was told he must have been a bear. The shepherds keep large dogs to drive the bears away, noble, lion-looking creatures, but I doubt their courage. The cats are as tame and homelike as the dogs are wild. They are just like our cats. Tell Judy, with my compliments, that I have seen several images of her, and they come up to be stroked and to steal just as Judy would. But the camels! Do either of you remember them or their groaning growl at anything they do not

like? I have seen them twisting round long necks, and showing their teeth in very dangerous fashion to their drivers. In the country I have seen thousands of them, and here, in this great Greek city (for it is more Frank and Greek than Turkish), when you are bargaining at a shop in the covered bazaar, you often have to stand aside to let a long train squeeze by. The weather continues dry and cloudless, cold in the night, fresh in the morning, and hot in the day, and I trust we shall get a fine passage to Athens. We do not get there till Monday, though we go aboard to-night. I am told I must go and pack, so good-bye, my darlings."

To his Wife.

"Austrian Ship *Trebizond*, off Zesmé,
"Saturday noon, October 26th, 1867.

"We are at anchor here, my dearest, taking in fruit at this our last Asian mainland, and I take the opportunity to write a few lines which I hope to send from Syra, to keep company with my letter to the girls from Smyrna. The sea is decidedly rough, and I should have expected to be ill as we came here; but the motion is so slight in this fine, very large, three-masted ship, more than one thousand tons, that I have felt hardly annoyance. There is a cool fresh breeze, and clouds are travelling over the hill tops, but they have moistened the air, and already I feel my throat soothed and softened and quite a different organ to what it was. Lithe, supple Greek boatmen are clustering round the ship, as though they and their boats were one animal, and over against us a few miles off are the villages and hills of Scio, the associations of which make me understand how the Greeks can never submit in patience to the Turks. A very pleasant old gentleman, who has been for thirty years a schoolmaster at Syra, says he alone is left out of a large family who were massacred, and he pointed out to me a respectable home-like looking man whose wife he said, though a daughter of a good family, had been sold as a slave. There are things not to be forgotten or forgiven, and it is vain to expect the Greeks to be good subjects of the Turks; and with all their faults they have the brain and the push, and the future I think lies with them. Travelling by these Austrian boats is leisurely and pleasant enough to persons like ourselves, in no great hurry. We are at anchor in the day, and steam in the night.

"*Syra, Sunday morning, October 27th, 1867.*—"Alas! my expectations of a good night have been woefully disappointed. About two we crossed from Zesmé over to Scio, and stayed

there at anchor till sunset, the storm rising every moment. I had just time to secure my dinner, and then settled down on my back. We did not pitch; but the long screw rolled so desperately that I had to hold on to my berth to prevent being turned out, and everything was set a-going. I was only really sick once, but very miserable, and demoralized, and helpless. This morning I came ashore to the hotel, and have had a cup of tea, which has rather cheered me; but the weather is still blustering, and I fear we shall have another bad night. We leave by the Athens boat, alas! a small one, about six, and we ought to get there about five to-morrow. This is a striking town, with its clean white houses, climbing up its pyramid of a hill, which I should mount had I enterprise, which in present plight I have not. . . . ”

His next stoppage was at Athens, where he was greatly interested in observing the character of the men who were engaged in building up a new kingdom. He attended a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies. “Very amusing it was,” he records, “though my friend’s comments were certainly not complimentary. ‘Do you see that handsome man in the grey dress, red cap and tassel, and embroidered jacket and white kilt-like petticoat? He was a brigand, this minister of war, and is still thought to be the ruling chief of the brigands.’ About one-third of the deputies wore the old Greek dress, but all the speakers seemed perfectly fluent, and there was an air of ease and *savoir faire* and self-possession about the assembly which confirmed the conviction that the Greeks will not endure a despotism, even though enlightened, but must be allowed to work out a good government in freedom as best they can. A tall, intelligent gentleman came to us in the gallery and recognized us as having been with him in the steamer. He was L—— P——, lately a minister, whom the brigands took out of his house a short time ago, and because he was a politician let him off with a ransom of sixty thousand drachme, about £2200, which has however ruined him. I wanted to go to Corinth by land, and asked him if it was safe. I wish you could have seen his expression as he put out his chin and said, ‘Possibly.’ I have of course given this up. I have no right to give the possible trouble it would cause. But it irritates me far more than in Turkey to find this young rising country thus robber-ridden.”

From Athens Mr. Forster made his way home by Corfu and Venice, concluding a delightful tour on November 15th, on which day he reached his home in Yorkshire.

CHAPTER XI.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

THE great work of Mr. Forster's life, that with which his name will always be associated, was the Act which gave the people of this country a national system of education. As we approach the time when the member for Bradford had the privilege of proposing the measure which was to rescue his fellow-countrymen from the reproach of ignorance that had so long rested upon them, it may be well to glance backwards as well as forwards, and to deal in one comprehensive section with the whole of his relations towards this great question. It is no easy matter to decide when his interest in the question of a national system of education first showed itself. Soon after he went to Bradford he had expressed himself as profoundly depressed by the terrible ignorance which characterized the great mass of the nation, and in all his speeches and lectures during these early days of his public life, he had insisted upon the right of the English working-man to demand an education for his children—such an education as could only be obtained through the action of the State. The *laissez faire* doctrine of the orthodox Radicals on the subject of State interference with the laws of supply and demand had always been abhorrent to him. He had insisted in 1848 upon the duty of the nation to provide work for its citizens, and from that date at all events, down to the moment of his triumph in 1870, he never ceased to maintain that the obligation laid upon the State in the matter of national education was imperative and undeniable.

His friend, Canon Jackson, of Leeds, was, of all those who survived him, the man best able to give some account of the growth of opinion in Forster's mind on the subject of education.* For many years the Leeds clergyman was not merely

* The name of another intimate personal friend and associate of Mr. Forster's in educational work, that of the Rev. Canon Robinson, must be mentioned with Canon Jackson's.

one of Forster's most trusted friends, but was the man whom he most loved to consult on social questions. And there was no question which was discussed between them more frequently than this of education. Their acquaintance had, indeed, commenced in connection with an educational movement. In the year 1849 certain ardent friends of education in Leeds had formed a small council or committee for the purpose of promoting some scheme—as yet wholly undefined and nebulous—of national education. Perhaps it ought rather to be said that they had come together for the purpose of discussing among themselves those preliminaries which it was necessary to settle before any common ground of agreement could be arrived at, as to the character of a national educational system. For the Leeds committee—to which certain gentlemen of Bradford were presently added—consisted of men of different shades of opinion. The supporters of a purely voluntary system, the stern puritans who denied the right of the State to interfere in the education of the child, did not associate themselves with the committee, but all other sections of educationists in Leeds and the surrounding district were represented upon it. The leading member was Dr. Hook, the famous vicar of Leeds, and among his colleagues were Canon Jackson, then Dr. Hook's senior curate, Mr. James Garth Marshall, M.P. for Leeds, known to all readers of Mr. Carlyle's "Reminiscences," Mr. Wicksteed, a Unitarian minister, and Mr. Forster. The reputation of Mr. Forster at that time—so far as it had reached the ears of Canon Jackson—was hardly that which might have been expected to recommend him to prominent clergymen like Dr. Hook and his colleagues at Leeds. He was known as a man whose views upon social and political questions were so advanced that in many quarters his name was associated with Chartism and Socialism. This, unquestionably, was a misconception of his position in politics, but it was one which at that time was widely prevalent in the West Riding. He was also known, however, for the energy and ability with which he had discharged his duties as chairman of the Bradford Board of Guardians, and for the freshness and originality of mind which he brought to bear upon all the questions he took up.

The Leeds educational council began its career by dealing with the most difficult of all the problems connected with a national system of education—that of religion. At that time the only suggestions for a scheme of religious education were those which gave the Church an immense, indeed an overwhelming, preponderance of authority and influence. It

followed, as a natural consequence, that advanced politicians, unable to acquiesce in this vast addition of power to the Church, turned in the direction of a purely secular system, in order to find a solution of the great problem. Mr. Forster was one of those who took this line. He was anxious to get over the religious difficulty by providing for the secular education only of the pupils in the national schools. But by-and-by, as at meeting after meeting of this undistinguished little association—which, though undistinguished, was destined to have no small influence over the final settlement of the education question—the various sides of the religious problem were dealt with, Forster began to waver. It will have been seen already in the course of this narrative that he was not one of those men who enter upon a discussion or an inquiry with their minds committed to a foregone conclusion. All through his life he was eminently “open to conviction,” and as idea after idea connected with the religious aspect of the education question was beaten out his views gradually changed. It is said that he was finally brought round to a conviction that in Bible-reading the true solution of the problem was to be found, by a remark made by Canon Jackson, that “it appeared that the one book in the English language which was to be excluded by Act of Parliament from the schools was the Bible.” Be this as it may, from 1849 onwards Mr. Forster never wavered in his belief that the teaching of religion, as set forth in the Bible, must form a part of any national system of education.

In 1849, the country was still, however, a long way from 1870. Many of those who had the strongest feeling in favour of the education of the people were wedded to the belief that the State had no right to interfere between parent and child; and, as a matter of fact, at a Tory meeting which was called at the instigation of the Educational Society in Leeds, the supporters of a national system were completely out-voted by the voluntary party under the leadership of Mr. Baines. All that the society could do at the time was to give its support to Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth’s scheme, under which grants were made to existing schools, subject to examination by Government inspectors.

Mr. Forster’s active interest in education had, however, been fully aroused by his participation in the work of the Leeds Association, and as the discussions of that body had enabled him to realize the practical conditions under which the good work could alone be carried on successfully, he now began, to the utmost of his power, to assist all educational

movements in his own district. At Burley he and his partners established an admirable school for the "half-timers" in their works. He secured as master of the school a youth of eighteen, who still holds the position to which he was appointed more than thirty years ago, and who has had the satisfaction of seeing the school, which was founded by the author of the Education Act, attain a remarkable degree of success. Forster's zeal in the educational cause was greatly stimulated by his active interest in this institution for the benefit of his own neighbours and work-people. He delighted to visit it, and to watch the operation of teaching, and he exulted not merely in the progress made by the pupils, but in the success of the master in securing the Government grant. Nor was it only of his own school at Burley that he was a regular visitor. His friend Canon Jackson was in the habit of spending some time every day in the schools he had established near his church in one of the poorest quarters of Leeds, and again and again on entering the building he would find Mr. Forster there, quietly watching the whole operation of the school, showing special interest in the mode of instruction by pupil teachers, and making himself a thorough master not only of the methods of teaching, but of the system of organization under which the school was carried on. To many it may seem to have been a mere matter of course that Forster should show this deep interest in the schools on his own property and in his friend's parish; for is not the school nowadays one of the first objects of interest which a landowner delights to show to his visitor? But Mr. Forster was no country squire with leisure on his hands, and the amount of time which, during many years, was bestowed by the busy manufacturer upon the practical study of schoolwork bears eloquent testimony to the reality of his interest in education.

It was this practical interest in the question, and not merely his theories on the subject of State education, which led him, in his unavailing attempts to win a seat at Leeds, to come forward as a strenuous advocate of a national school system, and which caused him, in 1864, to take a prominent part in the House of Commons in opposing Mr. Lowe's proposed new Minutes of Council. He was appointed a member of Sir John Pakington's Committee on Education, and took an active part upon it on the side of those who advocated the establishment of a national system. As a proof of the ignorance which then prevailed, even in high quarters, regarding the existing system, Forster used in subsequent years to relate that one of the questions put by an eminent member of the

committee to a witness was, "Pray will you oblige the committee by informing them of what may be the average payment that is made for Sunday school instruction?" Both in 1867 and 1868, whilst the two great political parties were absorbed in the question of Parliamentary Reform, and in trying to forecast the effect which the extension of the franchise would have upon the impending general election, Forster was one of those members who endeavoured to make some progress in the direction of a national system of education. In both years Mr. Bruce, on behalf of the Liberal party, brought in bills relating to education. That which was introduced in 1868 was drafted in consultation with Mr. Forster, and it contained the principle of compulsory provision for educational deficiencies, though compulsion was only to be applied where educational destitution had been proved to exist. This measure received little attention at the hands of members, absorbed as they were in preparations for the approaching general election, and, like the rival scheme of the Duke of Marlborough, it was ultimately withdrawn.

There was another position in which Mr. Forster was enabled not merely to show his interest in educational work, but to render valuable practical aid in the extension of national education. This was his appointment as a member of the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1864. The purpose with which the Commission was appointed was to make an inquiry into the condition of middle-class education in England, the grammar schools and other endowed schools not being of the class of public schools specially subjected to investigation. The work was thoroughly congenial to Forster, and he threw himself into it with his accustomed ardour and with that relish for the actual labour it imposed upon him which none can feel but he whose heart is in his task. "I do not know any man likely to take a sounder view of the best interests of the middle class in this respect," wrote Mr. Bruce (Lord Aberdare) when congratulating him on his appointment. It is unnecessary to enter into any details regarding the work of the Commission. The fruits of their report were duly embodied in a bill which Mr. Forster himself had the privilege of bringing forward in the House of Commons. From the year 1864 to the end of 1867, however, no small portion of his time was devoted to this inquiry into the condition of middle-class education in England, and he thus was not only brought into close contact with the eminent educationists who were his colleagues on the Commission, but had an opportunity of enlarging enormously his knowledge of the educational wants

of the country. That work of self-education which may be said, so far as this special subject was concerned, to have commenced with his membership of the Leeds Educational Association in 1849, was carried to something approaching to completion by his membership of the Royal Commission on Middle Class Schools in 1864-7. Thus, when the time came for the performance of that which was the chief work of his life, Forster was found to be not ill-equipped for his task. Not only were all his sympathies, political, personal, and intellectual, ranged on the side of the great mass of the people, whose exclusion from any real system of education he had deplored for years, but by association with ardent educational reformers of different parties, by practical experience in the work of school-management and school-teaching, and by the part he took in so important an investigation as that of the Schools Inquiry Commission, he had acquired a knowledge of his subject in all its aspects completely beyond that possessed by most public men. He found himself, moreover, distinctly in advance of most persons of his own rank in the political world upon this question of a national system of education. He was conscious that his views were much nearer to those held by the leading educational reformers than were the views of most of his colleagues in Lord Russell's Administration; and he was not unaware of the fact that the supporters of a scheme of national education, especially those who represented the principles now identified with the name of the Birmingham League, looked to him with confidence as the man who was destined to give legislative effect to their opinions. During the year 1868 it became increasingly clear to Forster himself that one of the dearest and noblest dreams of his life was approaching a realization, and that it was in all likelihood to him that would fall the great honour of founding a national system of education. Any one who understands the workings of an ardent and ambitious nature will know how great was the stimulus to renewed exertions with which this well-founded hope furnished him.

In the month of January, a "national conference" on education was held at Manchester. It was convened for the purpose of carrying forward the work of a previous conference (December 10th, 1866), at which a resolution had been passed in favour of the establishment of "complete provision for the primary instruction of the children of the poorer classes, by means of local rates, under local administration, with legal power, in cases of neglect, to enforce attendance at school." Mr. Bruce's bill of 1867 had been based upon this resolution,

though the bill of that year was permissive in its character, and did not provide for the establishment of new schools save where there was an actual deficiency of school-accommodation. The object of the conference of 1868 was to carry further forward the principles of compulsory school provisions, and Mr. Bruce and Mr. Forster were elected presidents of the meeting. During the course of the proceedings Forster made it clear that for the future he would support no measure that was merely voluntary, either as regards the provision of schools or the attendance of scholars. The prejudice against "compulsory education" as an un-English interference with the liberty of the subject still prevailed very largely. Mr. Forster pointed out, however, that under the Factory Acts there was already compulsion, and he strongly urged that when Parliament was at last asked to pass a National Education Bill, it should be founded upon such an extension of the Factory Acts as would make it certain that no child should be allowed to work full time until his or her education had been really completed. At the same time he opposed those more ardent members of the conference who were all for carrying a complete compulsory system at once, on the ground that national opinion was not yet ripe for so sweeping a change. This was practically the point reached by educational reformers in 1868, viz. compulsory establishment of rate-aided schools where a necessity for them was shown to exist, and compulsory attendance of scholars under some extension of the Factory Acts. The bill brought in during the session of that year by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Forster for the purpose of carrying these principles into effect was an abortive one; but the Manchester conference placed on record the fact that the educational reformers of England were prepared to support a compulsory measure of national schooling, and that Mr. Forster was one of the men to whom they looked to carry out their views in Parliament.

With the autumn of this year (1868) came the long-expected and much-dreaded general election, when the results of Mr. Disraeli's "leap in the dark" were to be made known. The election was not altogether a pleasant one for Mr. Forster, so far as his personal fortunes were concerned. The Liberals of Bradford selected as his fellow-candidate Mr. Edward Miall, a man of eminent private worth, but who was popularly identified with the advocacy of disestablishment, to which Forster had from his very first appearance in public life refused to commit himself. There were many Liberals in Bradford who regarded Mr. Miall as too extreme in his

opinions, especially on Church questions, and they insisted upon bringing forward an independent candidate of more moderate views in the person of Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Ripley. The two selected representatives of the Liberal party worked loyally together, and nothing occurred during the contest to weaken in the slightest degree the respect which each had for the other. But, as usually happens in such cases, their supporters were not able to work quite so harmoniously as they themselves did. The friends of Mr. Miall could not in every case bring themselves to believe that Forster and his friends were really zealous in the cause of their special candidate. No doubt these suspicions were repaid in kind by some of Mr. Forster's more ardent followers. Moreover, there had been great disappointment among many advanced Liberals in the borough at the fact that Mr. Forster, though accepting Mr. Miall as his fellow-candidate, had resolutely refused to commit himself to the disestablishment movement of which Mr. Miall was the leader. They had been immensely elated by the passing of the Household Suffrage Act, believing that all their political aspirations were now on the point of being realized; and they were correspondingly depressed when they found that one in whose Liberal sympathies they had placed such implicit trust, was not prepared to join them in rushing into an attack upon the Established Church.

The contest resolved itself into something like a triangular duel among the Liberals of the borough, and, as was inevitable under such circumstances, it was of a peculiarly bitter and exciting character. The reader need not be troubled with a history of the attempts which were made by the supporters of Mr. Ripley to sow dissension in the ranks of the allied followers of Mr. Forster and Mr. Miall. At this distance of time these common electioneering stratagems would not be worth mentioning, were it not for the undoubted fact that it was this election of 1868 which marked the beginning of that strained state of the relations between Mr. Forster and a large body of the Liberal party in Bradford which afterwards attracted so much public attention. The election resulted in the return of Mr. Forster at the head of the poll, with Mr. Ripley as his colleague, Mr. Miall polling some four hundred fewer votes than the latter gentleman.

Throughout the country the Liberal party was victorious, and the first Parliament elected under the Household Suffrage Bill resolved itself into a Parliament of ardent Liberals, determined to support Mr. Gladstone in carrying out those long-desired political reforms which it had been impossible to

achieve during the reign of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Disraeli, without waiting to meet the new House of Commons, resigned so soon as the result of the appeal to the country was known, and Mr. Gladstone was forthwith entrusted by the Queen with the task of forming an Administration. So far as its personal elements were concerned, it was distinctly in advance of any Ministry which had yet held office in England. Among the members of the Cabinet was found Mr. Bright, the man to whom the country had been so greatly indebted for the triumph of the Reform movement after the defeat of Lord Russell in 1866; and Mr. Forster himself was appointed Vice-President of the Council—in other words, he became Minister of Education in the reformed Parliament. Some disappointment was felt, and indeed openly expressed, when it was known that he was not to be a member of the new Cabinet; nor is it easy now to understand on what grounds he was excluded from it, seeing that in the programme of work undertaken by the Government there was no more important item than the passing of an Education Act. But the mysteries of Cabinet-making are inscrutable, at all events to the outer world. Mr. Forster himself accepted his appointment with a well-justified delight. The vision which had been only a vision a few months before had now become something real and substantial. He found himself in charge of the Education Department, with the prospect of being called upon in a few months to frame an Education Bill. It added to the pleasure with which he accepted the post that he had as his official chief at the Privy Council his old and dear friend, Lord Ripon, with whom in bygone days in Yorkshire he had spent many an hour in the discussion of the social problems of their time, among which none had occupied a larger share of their attention than this of education. As a consequence of his acceptance of the Vice-Presidency, Mr. Forster was made a member of the Privy Council. He was sworn in on the same day as Mr. Bright, Mr. Layard, and Mr. Childers.

Yet at the moment, when everything thus seemed at its brightest, Forster's public life was suddenly exposed to a terrible peril, and he himself to an ordeal of no ordinary severity. He had, of course, vacated his seat by his acceptance of office. No opposition, however, was offered to his re-election, and he was again duly returned as member for Bradford. But his political opponents in the borough had petitioned against his return in the election of November, and the question of whether he was or was not to be excluded from the new Parliament, in which he had already been appointed to so high

and useful an office, was awaiting the decision of an election judge. The petition had been presented against him by the supporters of Mr. Ripley, to avenge the action of Mr. Miall's friends in petitioning against the return of that gentleman. It would not be easy to conceive a more anxious or painful position than that in which Forster was now placed. It was not merely that his whole political future, the gratification of the laudable ambition to do great service to his country which had so long fired his soul, must depend upon the result of the election inquiry—this of itself was a very serious matter; but not less serious in his eyes was the fact that the purity of his relations with the constituents of whose honesty and straightforwardness he was so proud, was being impugned, and that he was accused of having won their favour by means distinctly corrupt. Throughout his life he had been an uncompromising advocate of purity of election, and had never, when occasion offered itself, failed to denounce those who had been guilty of offending against such purity. And now he was himself accused of having, through his agents, debauched the constituency which had sent him to the House of Commons. It is needless to say that he was conscious of his own integrity. But the contest, as has been said, had been a very bitter one, and on all sides men had strained every nerve to secure the election of the particular candidate whom they favoured. It was impossible for Mr. Forster to feel absolutely confident that no one among his own friends had failed to obey the law in all respects. For a time the anxiety which he had to endure was very acute.

The case against Mr. Ripley was heard first and the accusations brought forward were sustained. Mr. Ripley was unseated. Then came the turn of Mr. Forster, and, as might have been expected, his accusers were not made less vehement or bitter by the fate of their own candidate. It was in January, 1869, that the petition was inquired into before Mr. Baron Martin, the trial taking place at Bradford. The excitement in the town was unbounded. The Liberals of Bradford had hitherto been proud of their reputation as a political body, and they now felt that their good fame was hanging in the balance. Even more deeply were they moved by their knowledge of the fact that the political fortunes of the representative of whom they were so proud, and in whose personal honour all men believed, were at stake. Mr. Forster, as has already been said, was not a man regarding whom it was possible for any of his acquaintances, public or private, to entertain a neutral feeling. It was his lot either to be deeply

loved or strongly disliked by those with whom he was brought in contact; and the Liberals of Bradford—even those who had felt some disappointment because of his attitude on the Church question—at that time loved him as a brother.

When the end of the long inquiry was reached, and it was known that the judge was convinced of the purity and legality of Forster's election, such a scene of enthusiasm followed as has rarely been witnessed, even in the course of a Yorkshire electioneering contest. Writing to a relative directly after the close of the trial, Mrs. Forster said—

“I should have liked to describe to you the scene of excitement and rejoicing in Bradford when the result was known. Before the judge finished his speech, it became known outside the court that William was to keep his seat, and such a *roar* of exulting cheers arose outside as quite drowned the judge's voice. As we drove from the court-house the immense crowd hemmed in the carriage, clinging to the doors, thrusting in their hands with many a fervent ‘God bless you!’ and ‘Shake hands *once*, Mr. Forster,’ and with tears of joy on many a grimy face. You may imagine that William was much moved, and the short address he made them from the balcony of the hotel came from his heart. . . . In the evening, on returning to Burley, William was received by a torchlight procession, and the whole population turned out to welcome him. He and I and the two girls came down from the station in an open wagonette, and I could hardly describe to you the enthusiasm of the people.” A writer in the *Spectator*, describing the scene at Bradford, said, “Many men half cried for joy, and the intensity of the excitement when Mr. Forster returned to his hotel was of that kind which bespoke such relations between the people and their representative as probably scarcely holds in any other constituency in England. Bradfordians not only like Mr. Forster's grim honesty and unflinching respect for his fellow-men, but they love it.”

Nothing, perhaps, bore stronger testimony to the character of the hopes which had been excited by his appointment as Vice-President of the Council than the congratulations which were showered upon him by all sorts and conditions of men after his triumphant vindication. Mr. Applegarth, of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, in congratulating him, wrote, “Had the result been otherwise you would not only have had the sympathy of the working class, but it would have been regarded by them as a misfortune of no small magnitude to the cause of education.”

From LORD RUSSELL.

“February 3rd, 1869.

“MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,

“Let me congratulate you on the honourable and satisfactory termination of the inquiry into your election. You will now have time to devote to the great work of education of the labourers and artisans of the country. I entirely agree with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bruce that no great measure of education of the working classes can be undertaken this year. But I think you might, with the existing machinery, ascertain generally what the Royal Commission ascertained practically, namely, what is the real state of the education of the country.”

From LORD RIPON *to* MRS. FORSTER.

“February 3rd, 1869.

“I cannot resist writing to congratulate you on Forster's triumphant acquittal. I need not, I know, tell you how heartily I rejoice at it on every ground. I never doubted what the result would be, but I must confess that in spite of all my confidence I have often trembled to think that the folly of a rash supporter might deprive me of his assistance in the great work which we have before us.

“His aid as my colleague in that work is everything to me, and if an evil chance had deprived me of it, I should almost have despaired of accomplishing the task, which I am now very sanguine, if two or three years of ministerial life are given to us, that we shall be able to get through. It is a thing rarely secured in public life, to be able to work hand-in-hand, not only with an old friend, but with a friend in whom one has perfect confidence and thorough sympathy. This is now my good fortune, and the bare possibility that an excitable Bradfordian might have deprived me of it was, therefore, unpleasant indeed.”

But the time had not yet arrived for the introduction of the great measure. The session of 1869 was memorable in our national history as that in which the Act for the Dis-establishment of the Irish Church was passed. For Forster it had a somewhat different significance. It was the session in which he first successfully piloted a measure through the House of Commons. This was the Endowed Schools Bill, the result of the labours of the Commission on Middle-class Education, of which he had been so long a member. The Commission had reported very unfavourably on the state of the education

of the middle classes, and had made sweeping recommendations both as to the utilization of the many educational endowments of the country, which had practically been allowed to become obsolete and useless, and as to the reform of middle-class education generally, by the adoption of a system of school inspection. Forster strongly favoured the policy of the commission on both points, and was anxious to see the private schools of the country brought up to a standard commensurate with the importance of the part they played in the national education. But the popular feeling against State interference was too strong, and this part of the scheme had to be dropped. The magnitude of the work involved in the preparation of a measure like the Endowed Schools Bill may be inferred from the fact that it dealt with no fewer than three thousand schools, having a gross income of £592,000. The ministerial proposals were received with considerable favour, Mr. Forster's speech, in moving the second reading, meeting with a very good reception. Many vested interests were, however, affected by the measure, the chief object of which was so to reorganize the grammar schools and other middle-class educational endowments, as to create a link between the primary instruction of the poor and the highest education in the country. It was a hard fight to get the bill through, and many modifications had to be introduced into it in order to make it acceptable to the majority of the House. Still the measure eventually became law, and Forster had the satisfaction of knowing that his first year's work in the education department was associated with the passing of a bill which has done much to increase the educational resources of the country, and, above all, to improve the education of the middle classes, the deficiencies in whose school system he had himself experienced in his youth.

Education is not the only subject with which the Vice-President of the Council has to deal in his ministerial capacity. For some inscrutable reason he is also the minister who has to look after the health of the cattle of the country; and accordingly, during this year 1869, when his mind was so fully occupied with the great question of the nation's schooling, Forster had to spend no small portion of his time in coping with an outbreak of cattle disease, and in passing a measure designed to stamp out a threatened plague. For the present, however, it is with the education question that I have to deal; and it may be safely said that all through this year it was uppermost in the thoughts of Mr. Forster. Every speech that he made outside the walls of Parliament bore testimony to the

fact that his mind was now set steadily upon the accomplishment of the work to which he felt that he had been called. There is no question of public interest so trite as that of education—none on which so many speeches have been made, or so many dreary platitudes uttered. But the vigour and the freshness of Forster's mind enabled him to invest even this well-worn topic with interest and novelty; and all through 1869, whether in London, at Bradford, at Leeds, or at Liverpool, he devoted himself to the task of preparing public opinion for the introduction of a great and comprehensive scheme of national education.

Although comparatively few years have passed since the Education Bill became law, it is no longer an easy matter to trace its genesis. It has been shown that the Manchester Conference had gone far in the direction of a universal compulsory system of education, and that Mr. Forster was known to have shared in the views of that conference. There was another question, however, besides those of compulsion and universal provision of schooling, which was being earnestly discussed on both sides, and that was the question of religious teaching. To the Nonconformists as a whole any provision by the State for the teaching of creeds and catechisms was abhorrent. To a large section of Nonconformists of advanced views on politics, any teaching of religion whatever by paid public servants seemed wholly wrong and indefensible. To this section of the Liberal Nonconformists it also seemed that the schools established under the Minutes of Council by the clergy were a violation of those principles of religious equality to which they clung so stoutly, and their hope was that any scheme of national education would either transfer the Church and other denominational schools to the control of the ratepayers, or leave them to be carried on without any assistance whatever from the State. On the other hand, there were many eminent educationists connected with the Church who insisted that the fact that the clergy had led the way in the education of the people at a time when public opinion—and especially the opinion of the Nonconformists—was unfavourable to any system of public State-aided schools, gave the Church a right to special privileges and pre-eminence in connection with any new national system. With such conflicting pretensions as these, stoutly maintained on both sides, it is not surprising that the religious difficulty should have seemed to many sagacious observers to be the rock on which any attempt to found a national system of education was certain to be wrecked.

What line would Mr. Forster take on this religious question? That was the point which excited the greatest amount of interest and curiosity among the two parties during the autumn of 1869. Would he attack the Church schools, and, regardless of the good work they had done in the past, and were still capable of doing, subject them to the fatal competition of public schools, supported by the nation and controlled by the ratepayers; or would he, by some system of concurrent endowment, give those schools a permanent footing in the soil? Would he leave the ratepayers in each district or parish to decide for themselves what creed or dogma should be taught in their schools, or would he insist that in no school which had to rely mainly for its support upon national aid should any instruction in forms of faith or catechisms be given?

These were the questions which occupied men's minds in the autumn of 1869. They were important enough, in very truth, so far as their bearing upon the educational policy of the Government was concerned, and they were hardly less important as regarded their personal bearing upon the future of Mr. Forster himself. It might have been thought that there could be little doubt, at all events, upon some points. No one who knew Forster's reverence for all that was good and noble in the past, and the strong sense of justice which lay at the very root of his nature, could imagine that he would ever consent to destroy those Church schools which had kept the torch of education burning when almost everywhere else darkness prevailed. He himself, in a speech at St. James's Hall, in the early part of 1869, expressly declared his resolve "not to destroy anything in the existing system which was good, if they could avoid it." He did not wish, he declared in the same speech, "to strike a blow against what these men"—the clergy and other friends of education—"were doing; he wanted to establish a system that would embrace the whole of the country, and leave no children without a chance of education, whilst at the same time making the best of the existing machinery."

But though those who knew him well must have known that he meant every word which he thus uttered, and that there was no possibility of his being induced to lead a destructive movement against the denominational schools, there were many who, remembering only the reputation of his early days, when he was the ardent young politician of Bradford, over whose advanced views upon all social and political questions the Whigs of the borough shook their heads uneasily, felt convinced that he was resolved now to give England a

theoretically perfect system of national education, even though the establishment of such a system would involve the sweeping away of the existing schools. Those Radicals who believed—as many Radicals did believe in 1869 and 1870—that the passing of the Household Suffrage Act had removed every barrier to the realization of that programme of advanced legislation in which the Disestablishment of the Church holds a prominent place, could not be convinced that Mr. Forster would allow such an opportunity as that afforded by the framing of an Education Bill for striking a great blow on behalf of religious equality, to pass unimproved.

It is, unfortunately, necessary to dwell at this length on the state of public feeling in those days, because of subsequent events and their influence on Mr. Forster's career. It must be clearly understood, however, that the function of the biographer is to record, and not to apologize or to criticize. As a matter of fact, Mr. Forster, with that strong practical turn which was so thoroughly characteristic of him, was at this time thinking chiefly, not of the bearing of any measure which he might propose upon the state of parties, or upon particular questions in politics or sociology, but of the way in which he was to get the children of England into school. Least of all, it may be said with confidence, was he thinking at that time of his personal interests or of his political future.

In his diary for October 10th, 1869, there occurs the first mention of the Education Bill. At that time the bill must have taken distinct shape in his own mind, for a few days afterwards (October 21st) he submitted to the Cabinet a printed draft entitled, "Memorandum by Mr. Forster of suggestions for consideration in framing the Education Bill for England."

In this document he said, "We are called upon to consider the conditions of our educational vote, and to change our educational system, not because we pay too much money, nor yet because the money is thought to be badly spent, but because the nation does not get what it wants—a complete national system. Our aim, then, must be—(1) To cover the country with good schools; (2) to get the parents to send their children to school."

In attaining these objects, it was necessary, Forster pointed out, that there should be the least possible encouragement to parents to neglect their duties, the least possible expenditure of the public money, and the least possible injury to existing efficient schools.

"Our object, then, being to supplement the present

voluntary system—that is, to fill up its gaps at least cost of public money, with least loss of voluntary co-operation, and with most aid from the parents—let us consider the four different plans before us:—

“1. The plan just propounded at Birmingham, which provides that local authorities shall establish free schools when want of schools is proved, such schools to teach no religious dogma; to be built and maintained by rates and taxes, the rates paying one-third of the cost, the taxes the remainder; to be managed by the ratepayers, but to be inspected and kept up to a certain standard by the central government.

“2. The bill brought forward by Mr. Bruce in 1868, which was the first proposal to make compulsory provision for English schools, and which, while allowing districts to rate themselves for existing schools and for the erection of new schools, enabled the Government to compel them to levy such a rate upon educational destitution being proved.

“3. The plan sketched out by Mr. Lowe, which proposed that the Government should make a survey of the educational provision and need in each parish, should inform the public of such need, and, after giving time for its supply of voluntary effort, should compel the district to provide such supply, upon proof of the continued existence of the need; and, lastly,

“4. The plan proposed by the National Education Union, of inducing and tempting the volunteers to cover the whole country, by so increasing the aid given by Government to such volunteers as to make any compulsory provisions unnecessary.”

Proceeding to discuss these four schemes, Mr. Forster expressed his fear that the proposal of the National Union must be dismissed as insufficient. “Again, the complete logical machinery of the Birmingham League would quickly undermine the existing schools, would relieve the parents of all payment, would entail upon the country an enormous expense, and—a far more dangerous loss than that of money—would drive out of the field most of those who care for education, and oblige the Government to make use solely of official or municipal agency.” Mr. Bruce’s bill he had earnestly supported at the time when it was brought forward, but he now feared that it would need much modification; it would be impossible, for example, to compel the ratepayers to provide rate aid for denominational schools. “I, therefore, now look with most hope to the plan sketched out by Mr. Lowe, the ruling idea of which I understand to be compulsory school provision, if and where necessary, but not otherwise. But it

seems to me impossible to carry out this plan, unless we first, and without delay, divide the country into educational districts, and make every district responsible to the central government for the elementary education of its inhabitants. I cannot but think that all hope of success depends on this formation and responsibility of local districts, without which it is hard to see how a national system is possible. The central government cannot itself undertake to find schools and schoolmasters for the kingdom; and it is acknowledged that it cannot rely solely on the action of volunteers. Having formed the districts, officials in each district should be ordered to furnish returns showing the number of schools, of scholars, and of children at school and not at school; while the Government by its officers and inspectors would test and systematize these returns, and ascertain the efficiency of the schools. We should then have the facts and persons with whom to deal. The Government would know the amount of educational destitution in any district, and upon whom could be imposed the responsibility of its removal; and, when educational destitution could be proved, where it could be shown that there are either not enough schools or not enough good schools, notice could be given that if, within a certain time, the bad schools be not improved, or the new schools not erected, the district must raise the sum needed to supply the deficiency. Opportunity would thus be given to those who prefer the present management to keep it, and to those who dislike rates to do without them, but their preference and dislike would not be allowed to keep a district in destitution."

After discussing the manner in which the school districts should be formed, the incidence of the rates, and the desirableness of maintaining the payment of a certain proportion of the cost of the education of the child by the parent, where the latter is possessed of means, the memorandum proceeded:

"What power should we give the ratepayers? All the powers possessed by other managers, with this exception, no permission to teach special forms of Christianity. It would not be fair to tax a Roman Catholic to teach Methodism.

"Again, should the ratepayers assist existing schools? I would not *compel* them to do so; but I would permit them, if they pleased, to pay for secular education in denominational schools, in like manner as does the State. It is not unfair to levy a rate on a Roman Catholic for the secular education of a Methodist. But if the ratepayers give aid to denominational schools, they should do so impartially; if to any, then to all efficient schools, whether denominational or secular.

“The religious difficulty, so much feared in education bills, I cannot but think, will not be hard to overcome, if we remember, first, that we are and mean to remain a Christian people; and next, that we have made up our minds that the Government shall not in future legislation attempt to teach any special form of Christian faith. Carrying out these principles, we should refuse to establish, though we should not refuse to aid, either secular or denominational schools; but we should include the Bible and the acknowledgment of Christianity in any schools for which the Government, either by rates or taxes, is directly and solely responsible; and we should also, by ceasing to pay for dogmatic teaching by one denomination alone, that of the Church of England, be enabled to discontinue the present costly and inconvenient denominational inspection.”

Mr. Forster next discussed the question of how to secure the attendance of the children. It will be remembered that in his speech at the Manchester Conference in the previous year, he had advocated an extension of the Factory Acts, as a means of indirect compulsion; but, after mentioning this and other plans of the same conclusion, he informed the Cabinet that he did not think measures of partial and indirect compulsion would be difficult; “it would be much easier and more efficient if the law frankly declared it to be the duty of every parent who did not teach his child at home to send him to school, if a good school were within his reach.” The duty of securing the attendance of the children at school he would, however, impose upon the local authorities rather than upon the State. “Officials should be appointed by the ratepayers, whose duty it should be to warn a parent in case he neglected to send his child to school, and, in case of continued neglect, to bring him before the magistrates, who should be empowered to levy on him a small fine. The magistrates should also have power to order, at their discretion, the school-fee to be paid out of the rates, and also to require the guardians to compensate the parent for the earnings of the child, if convinced that he absolutely needed them.” Finally, Mr. Forster said, “In venturing to submit the above suggestions, I may be allowed to add my conviction that in dealing with this education question boldness is the only safe policy; that any measure which does not profess to be complete will be a certain failure; but that we shall have support from all sides, if, on the one hand, we acknowledge and make use of present educational efforts, and, on the other hand, admit the duty of the central government to supplement these efforts by means of local agency.”

Such was the first memorandum submitted to the Cabinet by Mr. Forster, on the subject of a national scheme of education. My readers will see how complete it was, and how on all its more important points it set forth the principles which were afterwards embodied in the Education Bill. No apology is needed for the length at which I have made extracts from this important document. As, however, some persons have been found who deny to Mr. Forster the merit of the authorship of our English system of education, I invite the careful attention of my readers to the terms of this memorandum, a perusal of which proves how completely the Education Act of 1870 was Mr. Forster's Act. His is the responsibility, and his the glory of having framed and carried a measure which has already changed English society for the good, and which will continue to bring forth fruit long after the statesmen of the present age have been forgotten.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

It was one thing, of course, to devise a scheme of national education, and quite another thing to secure its acceptance by the Cabinet, by Parliament, and by the country. Mr. Forster soon found that his difficulties had really only begun when he had drawn up the remarkable memorandum in which he set forth his ideas as to the manner in which the great problem was to be solved. Already some of his utterances had alarmed the Birmingham League and the men who were anxious to give the country a system the logical completeness of which was to be secured at the cost of the existing schools and the sacrifice of their founders. "I hope you are not contemplating a measure which will strengthen denominationalism," wrote a friend of his, who was a prominent member of the league; and he added, in words which certainly implied something like a threat, "we have unmistakable proofs that the people are on our side." For the moment, however, Forster was thinking of the Cabinet rather than of Birmingham, and above all of that member of the Cabinet who was its inspiring and controlling spirit—Mr. Gladstone.

On November 5th, he and Lord Ripon (then Lord de Grey) had an interview by appointment with Mr. Gladstone, and he speaks of it in his diary as having been "very satisfactory." A few days later Lord Ripon sent him a hasty note from Downing Street, in the following terms:—

"November 24th, 1869.

"The Cabinet has agreed to the preparation of an Education Bill on the basis of your memo., so I have appointed Jenkins to meet you at 1, Carlton Gardens, at 9.30 on Friday."

So far everything seemed to be going smoothly. The work of drafting the bill was set about in good earnest. But it had

not proceeded far before clouds appeared on the horizon. Rumour had naturally been busy with the nature of the measure, which it was known that ministers had in contemplation; and some of the statements concerning it were not altogether wide of the mark. At all events, the members of the Birmingham League conceived a well-founded suspicion that their favourite plan for a universal scheme of secular schools under local control was not that which had been adopted by ministers. Forthwith people began to whisper that the time was not yet ripe for the passing of an Education Bill, and that it would be much better to wait a year or two for the fuller formation of public opinion than to bring forward a scheme now which would not satisfy the advanced section of the Liberal party. It is noteworthy that at that time it was fully believed by many Liberals of intelligence that the election of 1868 had merely given us the foretastes of the reign of democracy, and that with each succeeding Parliament the strength of the popular party would be increased. Subsequent events have hardly confirmed this theory. Rumours, the natural results of the efforts which were being made to procure a postponement of the Bill, began to circulate to the effect that, after all, education was not to form part of the work of the session of 1870. Stories were at the same time told of dissensions in the Cabinet. Forster—who, it will be remembered, was not himself at this time in the Cabinet—became anxious lest, after all, the golden opportunity was about to be let slip.

To MR. GLYN.

“Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,
“December 6th, 1869.

“DEAR GLYN,

“Will you let me say a word to you on education matters? Many persons have been expressing alarm to me in consequence of the recent newspaper gossip about educational differences in the Cabinet—probable postponement of bill, etc., etc. Of course I have pooh-poohed such gossip as foolish *canards*, but I have been met with the statement that the rumours came from persons connected with the Government. I do not believe this, but the *Observer* has so much the reputation of being inspired that I think the article yesterday will increase this impression. Do you think you can do anything, if not to counteract this, at any rate to prevent its continuance? There was one specially ridiculous *canard* that Lowe urges delay, whereas he, as well as Bruce, have with me

the strongest possible opinion that we ought to make up our minds to prepare a bill and carry it. We can carry a good strong Education Bill this year, whereas if we postpone, the Government will lose the initiative, and have to wait years till the great battle of denominationalism be fought out, or else bring forward their own bill at great disadvantage. Of course, everything must give way to Irish land; but as regards Irish matters, I believe postponement of education would be equally bad policy, because by putting off an urgent English measure on Irish grounds we should enrage English members, and excite the suspicions of the Irish Catholics. We shall gain nothing, but lose much, by departing from the true ground, that the conditions of the education problem are different in Ireland and in England. However, I need not bore you with arguments against postponement which, if needed, I could and would give fully. My sole object is to beg you, if you have a chance, not to let De Grey's and my difficulties be increased by talk, supposed to be inspired, against the views which I understand to be those of the Cabinet."

"MR. GLYN to MR. FORSTER.

[*Confidential.*]

"December 7th, 1869.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"I alluded to the subject of your note when talking to Mr. G. to-day. He has confidence in your plan; does not despair of time, but will postpone anything and everything to the land. It will be very wrong and unwise, I think, in any one connected with the Government or any paper we can influence, either to throw cold water upon education *this* year, or to give any specific engagement where *time* must be an important element. Whether you are right that you could do more this year than by waiting for a more decided concentration of opinion than you now have, wiser heads than mine will decide. My care will be to prevent, if I ever can, gossip or any prejudice by the press. The *Observer* has no inspiration now, and is doing no good. . . . There is, I well know, no truth at all in the absurd ideas of any Cabinet differences upon the question. The Education Bill must have a high place in the sessional programme. Whether time will suffice is another thing. All will, I think, agree—at least, I hope so—that *two big questions* can't go on at the *same time* in the House, and that land is No. 1! I have heard little of *late* in the way of talk by outsiders upon the question of putting off the educa-

tion question, and till I got your note I was happy to believe that there seemed a disposition to trust the Government as to 'when and how.'

This letter was not wholly conclusive as to the eventual decision of ministers on what Forster conceived to be the momentous question of the production or postponement of the measure, and he continued to feel anxiety on the subject. Nor was his anxiety allayed by the fact, which soon leaked out, that certain portions of the bill met with considerable discussion in the Cabinet, which was then meeting regularly to consider the programme of the session. Mr. Gladstone was practically absorbed in the preparation of his great measure on the tenure of land in Ireland, by means of which he hoped to effect so much, and but for the steadiness and perseverance of Lord Ripon, who now, as at all times, worked with affectionate cordiality with his colleague in the Privy Council office, it is quite possible that the measure might have been put off to a more convenient season. This, however, was not the case.

“LORD RIPON *to* MR. FORSTER.

“February 4th, 1870.

“MY DEAR FORSTER,

“The bill is through—compulsion and all; to be brought in as at present advised on Thursday the 17th. This is first-rate.

“Yours ever,

“DE GREY.”

On February 8th, the first night of the session, Forster gave notice of his Education Bill amid the cheers of the House. The date fixed for the first reading was that named in the Cabinet, Thursday, February 17th. His diary for that day contains the following entry:—“Went over notes of speech with Jane. Lunch-dinner—just went to office—took to House Cumin, Sandford, and Hutton, J. Cropper also with us. Began my education speech about 5.45. Spoke for about one hour and forty minutes—both speech and bill very well received—dragging debate till about ten—only opponents, Lord R. Montague and Whalley. Pakington very strong in favour.”

This matter-of-fact description hardly conveys an idea of the reception accorded to the remarkable speech in which Mr. Forster brought forward his great measure. The speech was

a brilliant triumph in the Parliamentary sense, and it was made all the more brilliant by the force of contrast. A few days before a crowded House had sat entranced whilst Mr. Gladstone had given that wonderful account of the provisions of his Irish Land Bill, which is regarded by many competent critics as the most remarkable of all his oratorical achievements. It was no easy matter to follow Mr. Gladstone at so short an interval and before the same audience. Mr. Forster, however, was equal to his task. Making no attempt at oratorical effect, he contented himself by giving to the House the clearest and simplest exposition in his power of the provisions of his bill. Such colour as his speech had was derived, not from the resources of the rhetorician, but from the speaker's depth of feeling, from the earnestness, the manifest emotion with which he spoke upon a question that had for years been so near to his heart. If there was no trace of vanity in manner or words, there must have been within him a strong sense of grateful pride, that to him at last it should have fallen to be the instrument under Providence of converting into a reality that which had for years been the dearest dream of so many noble spirits. His work on earth was not yet done. Much of toil, of endeavour, and of achievement still lay before him; yet Forster's friends may well feel, and feel with deep gratitude and contentment, that upon the day on which he stood up in the House of Commons to explain the scheme, born of his fertile brain and matured by his patient care and industry, for bringing to every child of English birth the blessings of education, he reached the highest point in his career as patriot and statesman. No greater duty was ever laid upon any public man of our century, nor could higher honour be coveted by any.

The measure as explained to the House by Mr. Forster differed upon some not unimportant points from his original scheme, though in the main the outlines of that scheme had been faithfully followed. In his memorandum he had proposed that compulsion should be applied absolutely. In the bill it was left to the local authorities in each district to determine whether attendance at school was or was not to be compulsory. Again, in the memorandum it was made more clear than it was in the bill itself that any aid which might be given by the local authorities to schools already existing was to be confined exclusively to secular education. Upon the whole, however, Mr. Forster's scheme had been accepted by the Cabinet. The country, as he had proposed, was to be divided into districts, and the educational deficiencies in each district

were to be ascertained. An opportunity was then to be given to voluntary workers in the cause of education to supply those deficiencies, and where they failed the State was to step in and, acting through the local authorities, was to see that sufficient school-accommodation was provided. This was the outline of the plan proposed by Mr. Forster. It was not by any means logically or theoretically perfect. It was not designed to please any one class or party in the community; but it was, at all events, likely, if honestly carried out, to secure for the children of the country free access to good schools, and that was the one end at which its author aimed.

On its first production the bill was favourably viewed. Mr. Fawcett, it is true, uttered a protest against its failure to make compulsory attendance absolute and universal; but this was the only discordant note that was sounded, and even Mr. Dixon, the representative of the Birmingham League, expressed himself as satisfied with the measure and anxious for its success. On the following morning the press hailed the scheme with a chorus of approbation, and everybody seemed disposed to congratulate its author upon the manner in which he had solved a great problem.

Mr. Forster himself knew better than to expect that this pleasant state of things would last, though it must be said of him that he was hardly more prepared than other persons for the passionate opposition which was so soon to be evoked by his proposals among those politicians with whom he had once been in the closest accord. There is no need now to rewrite the history of the education controversy of 1870 and the three following years. Forster's vindication is to be found in the results of the great measure which he succeeded in carrying, in face of every obstacle, through the House of Commons. Even if, in procuring the passing of that bill, he had sacrificed his whole political future, and alienated all his friends, he would still have had his own exceeding rich reward in the consciousness that he had given our English children the schools which had so long been withheld from them. From the first he knew that by refusing to adopt the "logical system" of the Birmingham League, he had exposed himself to the bitter hostility of every *doctrinaire* Radical. He knew, too, that by refusing to employ education as a stalking-horse, by means of which to attack the Established Church, he had inflicted a grievous disappointment upon those Nonconformists who, anxious as they were to advance the cause of education, were still more anxious to secure the establishment of absolute religious equality throughout the land. But he felt that he

had ample justification for the course which he had taken, in the fact that if he had been either logically or politically orthodox, he must have postponed the passing of an Education Act indefinitely. The leaders of the Birmingham party themselves admitted that such postponement would be necessary if any sweeping measure, such as that which they contemplated, were to be brought in by the Government. They believed, however, that this postponement would only be for a single year, or for two years at most, and they regarded it as a crying evil that what they described as "a premature attempt to legislate" should be made before public opinion was ripe enough to support their own advanced schemes. Forster himself held a different opinion. He had studied practical politics long enough to know that it is as easy and safe to predict the state of the weather as the state of the political atmosphere at any particular moment. He knew better than to suppose that, if an opportunity were allowed to pass unimproved in 1870, it could with certainty be reckoned on to present itself again in 1871. Speaking to his old Bradford friend, Sir Jacob Behrens, who had objected to the absence of general compulsion, and the inclusion of the religious question in the bill, he said, "If these two questions are to be fought out to the bitter end, I feel sure that generations of Englishmen will have to go to their graves without education; but, having the chance of carrying a bill, I consider it my duty to do so."

Was he right in this belief, to which he clung strongly to the end of his days? Was it a wise act on his part to take the opportunity of passing a bill, instead of waiting until the moment came when *the* bill of the Birmingham League could have been carried, not merely through the House of Commons, but through the House of Lords? Above all, was he a traitor not merely to his political party, but to his own political convictions, when he brought forward a measure which, though admirably designed to attain its own special object, was undoubtedly not calculated to promote the policy of the Radical party with regard to religious questions? It is well that I should set these questions plainly before my readers, for they are questions which were asked again and again during Mr. Forster's lifetime, and which were answered, as a rule, in accordance with the personal prejudices or prepossessions of the individual to whom they were addressed. From the moment when he laid that measure, which is the *magnum opus* of his life, upon the table of the House of Commons, down to the day of his death, Mr. Forster, more than any other politician of his time, was the subject of a controversy

which dealt not merely with his methods and results, but with his motives. Fierce and innumerable were the attacks which were made upon him by some, and generous and warm was the defence which was offered on his behalf by others. But too often the attacks came from those who had once been his friends and fellow-workers, whilst many a time it was by some stranger or political opponent that his action was vindicated. No one can doubt that this fact did much to prejudice Mr. Forster in the eyes of his contemporaries. No one, indeed, would have been more ready to admit that it must be so than himself; for with all the strength of his warm and tender heart he yearned for the sympathy and approval of those with whom he had been in lifelong sympathy, whilst not even the stirring atmosphere of the House of Commons in times of fierce political contest, could make the applause of his opponents altogether grateful to his ears.

I ask my readers, then, to consider, with that patience and impartiality which befit those who pass judgment on the dead, whether Forster really erred in the course which he took on this question of education. One accusation against him I may indeed put aside with disdain. It was said by some, whose whole souls must have been embittered by the gall and wormwood of religious and political intolerance, that he had "forced forward" the Education Bill to gratify his own personal ambition. Those who have read the previous chapters of this book know that Forster was ambitious; but they must also know how little of self-love and self-seeking entered into his political conduct. The man who ran the risk of commercial ruin in 1848 rather than abandon the political opinions which he shared with the Chartists, and who at Leeds sacrificed the hope of obtaining a much-coveted seat in Parliament rather than modify his views on this very question of education, will, I think, be acquitted by every one of having allowed mere self-interest to control his course of action as a minister. It is obvious, indeed, that if Forster were guilty of "forcing" education upon the country merely to serve his own ends, the members of the Cabinet of 1870 must have been his accomplices. He was an outsider. He had to be content with laying his views on the subject before them in a printed memorandum, of which I have furnished my readers with an abstract. No one in his senses can imagine that, in accepting his proposals and in authorizing him to prepare a bill on the lines he had indicated, Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were merely yielding to the consuming ambition of a subordinate.

But, upon the question of time, what verdict will now be

given by the country? Does any one now really believe that if the golden days of 1870 had been allowed to pass unimproved, a better bill than Mr. Forster's could have been carried in 1871 or 1872? Governments, like individual men, no sooner begin to live than they begin to die. In 1870 Mr. Gladstone's Ministry was at the very zenith of its power and popularity, and that which it could not accomplish that year it most assuredly could not have accomplished in any subsequent year of its existence, even if the inexorable and ever-growing pressure of public affairs had again furnished a chance for the introduction of an Education Bill. I need not pursue this question further, for each of my readers can determine for himself whether since 1874 there has been any real opportunity for inducing the two Houses of Parliament to embody the Birmingham plan of education in a legislative measure. All that need be contended for on behalf of Mr. Forster, is that he was right when he maintained that the choice lay between the passing of the best possible bill in 1870, and the indefinite postponement of any attempt to introduce a national system of education. He himself felt far too deeply on the question to be able even to contemplate the notion of postponement. It was no abstract love of education, no predilection for any particular theory on the subject, that led him to seize with joy the first opportunity of setting up schools into which should be gathered the great army of untaught children. In this, as in other matters, it was the practical and the personal aspect of the question which attracted him most strongly. He saw at Bradford, at Leeds, and in London, hosts of little children whom he knew to be growing up in a real and terrible heathendom. He would sometimes stop these children in the street, question them closely as to how they lived, what they knew, and to what they were looking in future life; and he would turn away from them with wet eyes, and a heart that was wrung with pity for a lot so hopeless. "Let each of us," he said, in the peroration of his speech when introducing his bill, "think of our own homes, of the villages in which we have to live, of the towns in which it is our lot to be busy, and do we not know child after child—boys or girls—growing up to probable crime, to still more probable misery, because badly taught or utterly untaught? Dare we, then, take on ourselves the responsibility of allowing this ignorance and this weakness to continue one year longer than we can help?" He was thinking of the children whom he actually knew, whom he had seen, and with whom he had conversed, when he drew up his bill; and its first, its only object, was to get these

children, and others like them, into school; not to strike a blow at a particular Church, or to strengthen the cause of a political party, even though that party was his own.

But the storm which raged round the bill whilst it was passing through the House of Commons was extraordinarily severe. When the members of the Birmingham League, and the other advocates of a State-controlled compulsory system, saw that under the new measure the denominational schools, instead of being swept away or left to wither under an irresistible competition, were to be maintained and afforded a chance of competing on fair terms with the new board schools, they were roused to a manifestation of opposition and anger such as has seldom been directed against any Ministry by its own political friends. On March 9th, after some days of agitation in the country, an "enormous noisy deputation," representing the League party, waited on Mr. Forster. Five days later the bill came on for second reading in the House of Commons, and it was met by a hostile amendment on the part of Mr. Dixon, which declared that no measure of education would afford a satisfactory or permanent settlement which left the question of religious instruction in rate-supported schools to be determined by local authorities. It was the religious question upon which the opponents of the bill had determined to take their stand. They feared that all manner of evil must result from the proposal to allow the local authorities any kind of discretion as to the manner in which religious truths were to be conveyed to the children. Forster protested strongly against any attempt to prevent religious teaching in the schools.

"Our opinions in religion," he said, replying to Mr. Dixon, "may be different; but I think we all of us agree, the enormous majority of the country agrees, that the standard of right and wrong is based on religion, and that when you go against religion you strike a blow against morality; and if we could solemnly by Act of Parliament tell the parents of children to be educated that religion is a subject not to be mentioned in the schools, they would suppose that we cared little about religion ourselves, and that in our opinion it were best left alone. We are told that some active and intelligent artisans, men to whom we look forward with hope that they will take part in the political government of the country—we are told that they have great doubts on the subject, and that they dislike any religion being pushed on them in this way. I believe that to some extent that is the case, and there is something in their past history to explain it; but if the House wishes to perpetuate that feeling, the way to do it is to decree

that religion shall be tabooed. I speak not merely having regard to the present, but as having hope for the future. Surely the time will come when we shall find out how we can agree better on these matters—when men will find out that on the main questions of religion they agree, and that they can teach them in common to their children. Shall we cut off from the future all hope of such an agreement, and say that all those questions which regulate our conduct in life and animate our hopes for the future after death, which form for us the standard of right and wrong,—shall we say that all these are to be wholly excluded from our schools? I confess I have still in my veins the blood of my Puritan forefathers, and I wonder to hear descendants of the Puritans now talk of religion as if it were the property of any class or condition of men. . . . I would say that it belongs to all religious men to teach religion, and the master of the school, we trust, will be a religious man. To no religious man can we say leave religion alone. My honourable friend the member for Birmingham talked of the failings of the working men. I have some experience of the working men. I know their sympathies; I know their doubts and difficulties; I wish I knew how to answer them; but I am sure of this—the old English Bible is still a sacred thing in their hearts. The English people cling to the Bible, and no measure will be more unpopular than that which declares by Act of Parliament that the Bible shall be excluded from the school.”

For three nights the discussion was maintained with vigour, the fears expressed by many of the Nonconformists, as well as by not a few of the Conservatives, as to the effect of allowing religious teaching to be given at the discretion of the local authorities by the teachers, being of the strongest kind. Eventually, however, on March 18th, on a promise from Mr. Gladstone that the clause relating to religious instruction should be reconsidered and amended, the amendment of Mr. Dixon was withdrawn and the bill read a second time.

“*To the REV. CANON KINGSLEY.*

[*Private.*]

“House of Commons, April 1, 1870.

“MY DEAR KINGSLEY,

“Thank you for your note. Knowing you were not at the League deputation, I was rather surprised to see your name quoted as present. I still fully believe that I shall get my bill through this year, but I wish parsons, Church and

other, would all remember as much as you do that children are growing into savages while they are trying to prevent one another from helping them.

“Yours ever faithfully,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

It was before the introduction of the bill, and at a time when rumour was busy as to its character, that the illustrious Lord Shaftesbury, alarmed by some reports that he had heard, went on behalf of the Ragged School Union to ask Mr. Forster if it was true that Bible-teaching was to be excluded from the new schools. Going directly after his interview with Mr. Forster to a meeting of the committee of the Union, Lord Shaftesbury reported the answer he had received as follows:—“Lord Shaftesbury,—I would rather have my right hand cut off than be the means of excluding the Bible from our day schools.”

It would be wholly unprofitable and wearisome to discuss all the phases through which the controversy on the bill passed before it finally became law. All the less necessary is it to inflict pages of *Hansard* upon the reader, inasmuch as the experience of seventeen years has proved that most of the fears which were expressed regarding the operation of the bill on the one side by the representatives of the voluntary schools, and on the other by the members of the League, were wholly illusory. But whilst the House of Commons was engaged either in resisting the insidious attempts of the Church party to procure exceptional advantages for themselves—as, for example, when they proposed to relieve a man of any liability to a school-board rate provided he subscribed an equivalent amount to a voluntary school—or in hair-splitting as to what was and what was not denominational or dogmatic religious teaching, Forster, steadily pursuing the one great object he had in view, the passing of an efficient Education Bill, had many anxieties to encounter. The feeling among the friends of the League grew higher out of doors. They rallied for an attack upon the bill, and they sought to strengthen that attack by making a personal appeal to Mr. Gladstone, founded upon the well-known fidelity of the Nonconformists to those principles of which Mr. Gladstone was now the foremost representative.

It is somewhat difficult to see how, in such a matter as this, men could distinguish between the Prime Minister and one of his colleagues, who did not even hold a seat in the Cabinet. It affords testimony, however, to the great place which Mr. Forster now held in the eyes of his fellow-country-

men, that it was upon him—a junior official—rather than upon the responsible head of the Government, that his opponents sought to fasten the whole responsibility for the measure. Of course, Mr. Forster was responsible for it. He was responsible for its inception. It was he who had written the memorandum setting forth the outlines of the schemes; it was he who had drafted the bill in conjunction with Mr. Jenkins. But when it is remembered that the bill, when thus drafted, was discussed clause by clause in that Cabinet of which Mr. Forster was not a member, and that alterations were made in it—some affecting this very religious question—without his consent, sometimes without his knowledge, it is difficult to understand upon what ground the Birmingham party sought to exonerate the rest of the Ministry from all responsibility for the measure, and to treat Mr. Forster as a scapegoat. Mr. Gladstone, as it happened, was at this time so deeply absorbed in the Irish Land Bill that he could not enter into any full consideration of the questions at issue between the Nonconformists and the Ministry. Nevertheless, every member of the Government felt the importance of these issues, and by way of allowing time for a clearing of the air, the bill, having been read a second time, was hung up for a period of no less than three months. During that interval Forster sought, as far as he could, to meet the views of his old friends. There were only two points upon which he seemed determined not to give way, but they were the very points at issue. He would not throw over the voluntary schools, by which so much good had already been accomplished, and he would not abandon Bible-teaching in the schools. In a memorandum written for his own guidance in replying to questions in the House, and dated May 26th, 1870, he says, "I cannot assent to any amendment which shall prevent a time being fixed within school hours for instruction in religious subjects in a rate-provided school, or which shall prevent the school boards from allowing the schoolmaster of such school to give Bible lessons during such time."

The great fear was that between the furious assaults of the Birmingham party on the one side, and the strong dislike to any system of public schools entertained by the denominationalists on the other, the bill might suffer shipwreck. Writing to Mr. Forster (March 24th) regarding one of the concessions made to the League party, that eminent educationist, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, said—

"I fear that the secularists and the Nonconformists are not satisfied with the concessions made by you, viz. that in all schools a continuous time shall be devoted solely to that in-

struction for which the State gives aid, and that in schools founded and supported by the rates, the buildings shall be available, before and after the usual school hours, for such religious instruction as any communion may desire to give to scholars whose parents are connected with it. . . . I expected that any attempt, by such concessions, to settle in whole or in part the constitution of the schools founded and supported by the rates, would fail either, on the one hand, to satisfy the extreme Liberal minority, or, on the other hand, if it satisfied them, would provoke a fatal opposition to the bill from the Church and the other religious bodies. Nevertheless, I think you were quite right in trying the result of these two concessions; for you leave the extreme Liberal party without excuse, and in a position fatal to their influence in the House on this question. They must now endeavour to postpone the education of the people, either till religious equality is attained by the disestablishment of the Church, or until positivism is set up, if not instead of, then on an equality with, Christianity. I do not for a moment doubt what your decision is. You will carry your bill in all essential features as it stands if you are simply resolute and calm; but, of course, not without the price which every statesman has to pay in serving his country. You will have to do what I have done over and over again in this cause—you will have to disappoint some of your friends, in order that the education of the people may not be indefinitely postponed."

There was another old friend of his Leeds days, the man who had been his associate when he was first engaged in grappling with the difficulties of a scheme of national education, who wrote to him about this time. This was Dr. Hook, formerly Vicar of Leeds, and then Dean of Chichester. "The truth is," said Dr. Hook, "I have always regarded the religious question as merely a political squabble." Dr. Hook's views were certainly not those of Mr. Forster; but in this great controversy of 1870, it must be confessed that religion and politics were most curiously and inextricably mixed up together.

Bradford, which had sent Mr. Miall to the House of Commons as Mr. Forster's colleague, had always contained a large body of Liberals who felt strongly upon the question of religious equality. Many of them felt keenly now what they conceived to be the retrograde character of the Education Bill, and its author was assailed not merely by the vehement denunciations of the League, but by the private appeals of those who were his intimate personal friends, and who had hitherto been among his most earnest and powerful political supporters.

Any man might have been forgiven for quailing before the strong influences which were now brought to bear upon Mr. Forster to induce him either to abandon his bill for the present, or to recast it in such a manner as to make it acceptable to the Liberationists and the Birmingham League. It would be useless to attempt to conceal the fact that he was greatly affected by this action on the part of so many whose friendship and goodwill he valued, but he certainly did not quail. To recast the bill would have been to ensure its rejection probably in the House of Commons, certainly in the House of Lords. Mr. Forster was bent upon one object only. He was determined, now that the opportunity for doing so had presented itself, to get the children of England into school, and that object he was resolved to attain, even although in doing so he might make shipwreck of his position as member for Bradford.

In a letter of this date to Mrs. Charles Fox, he says, "Thank thee for the enclosed; but still more for thy own letter. I value ——'s approval, but thine is much more precious to me on a matter like this, which has gone close home to my heart and conscience." A few days later he writes to the same lady, "It does rest much with me just now whether or no the State shall decree against religion—decree that it is a thing of no account. Well, with my assent the State shall not do this, and I believe I can prevent it, though very probably by my own ostracism; but that does not matter."

On May 18th, the Cabinet having agreed to propose various amendments relating to the religious question which Forster felt would not satisfy the Radical opposition, he wrote to Lord Ripon, strongly urging certain considerations which he wished to be submitted to Mr. Gladstone.

"There are very many indications on both sides of the House," he said, "that if we do take the lead, we may now make a settlement by (a) a time-table conscience clause for all public elementary schools; (b) exclusion of the Catechism from the schools provided and managed by the ratepayers; (c) limitation of rate-aid to denominational schools of payment for secular results, and to such an amount as would oblige their managers to pay *something* for denominational management. If, then, these things be proposed together, I believe there will be a give-and-take feeling all round; but if we propose (a) without declaring our views as to (b) and (c), everybody will be suspicious, the Unionists and Opposition will fear further concessions by us to the Leaguers, and the latter will think

we are opposing them on the point on which they care most."

These views were duly communicated to Mr. Gladstone, and they bore fruit in the statements made by the Prime Minister when the committee stage of the bill was reached. Before this, however, Forster had to face a very trying ordeal—a vigorous attack upon him by those Bradford Liberals who sympathized with the League. He had gone down to Bradford during the Whitsuntide recess, and the League party took the opportunity to bring their influence to bear upon him, in order to induce him to alter the bill in accordance with their wishes. It will have been gathered from what has already been stated, that Mr. Forster was more nearly in agreement with this section of his constituents than was generally supposed. If he was resolved on no consideration to allow religious teaching to be excluded from the schools, he was equally anxious to do what he could to prevent the employment of the rates or other public funds for denominational purposes. Again, he was now attacked at Bradford because of the permissive character of the compulsion to be applied by the boards, and he had to defend this feature of the bill, although it was one of which personally he did not approve, his original proposal having been in favour of general and absolute compulsion. Loyal at all times to his colleagues, his loyalty was never more conspicuous than when he had to defend their policy on points upon which he was unable to agree with them; and his constituents at Bradford, when they reproached him because of the defective character of the bill with regard to compulsion, could never have dreamt, from the manner in which he defended the measure, that he was not himself heart and soul in its favour on that particular point. It cannot be said that he succeeded in removing the objections of the Leaguers at Bradford to the bill, but his reply to them seems to have given satisfaction elsewhere. Mr. Gladstone wrote immediately after reading the report of his speech, to thank him for it. "It is difficult," said he, "either for you or for me, or for any one, to speak or converse at any length without betraying one's personal preferences on this or that point, but I think you have evidently and successfully endeavoured to avoid committing yourself or the Government."

The Prime Minister went on to state his concurrence in the view expressed in Mr. Forster's letter to Lord Ripon, that the only sound course, if the bill could not be maintained in its existing shape, would be to limit the application of the rate absolutely to secular purposes. Lord Ripon also

wrote from Balmoral to thank Mr. Forster for his speech to his constituents.

"Your business and mine," he continued, "is simply to try and get the bill through without alterations to which we object. If Gladstone prefers to carry it by the aid of the Tories rather than by conciliating the bulk of the Liberals, that is his affair, not ours, and we must let him do what he likes on that point."

I have ventured to quote these words, inasmuch as they bear upon one of the gravest complaints urged against Mr. Forster by those who objected to his management of the Education Bill. Again and again it has been alleged against him as a serious offence that he was content to rely upon Conservative votes in carrying his measure, regardless of the feelings and wishes of his own political associates. There can be no doubt that it was the belief that this accusation was well founded, which contributed more than anything else to the embitterment of his relations from that time forward with no inconsiderable section of the Liberal party. Those who charged him with thus bidding for Conservative support in order to silence his own friends wrong him grievously, as can readily be proved by indisputable documentary evidence.

The fate of the bill, even after his appearance before his constituents, was still in suspense. No one could be quite sure that Mr. Gladstone intended to press forward with it during that session. Mr. Gladstone himself held strongly to the bill in the shape in which it had first been introduced; but he had been startled and alarmed by the rising of the Liberal party against it, and he did not appear to share the robust self-confidence with which Mr. Forster faced the formidable flank attacks that were being delivered upon the Government from the benches below the gangway.

As the date fixed for returning to a discussion of the measure in the House of Commons drew near, the Cabinet felt constrained to proceed with the bill, and it was resolved that Mr. Gladstone should open the debate in committee by making a statement as to the changes which ministers were willing to introduce in order to satisfy their friends. It was in consequence of this determination that Mr. Forster submitted to Mr. Gladstone (June 12th) a memorandum on the subject of the measure and the rival amendments which had been proposed by the representatives of the different sections of their own party.

"The first question which suggests itself," says Mr. Forster in this memorandum, "is, Why listen to either of their amend-

ments? Why not stick to our bill as it stands? Our proposal that the majority should have what religious teaching it pleases while the minority is protected, is logical and impartial in theory, and would work well in practice. Can we not, then, carry it? Yes, with the help of the Opposition; but I fear a majority of our side of the House would vote against it. All the Radicals, not merely men like Fawcett, but earnest supporters of the bill like Mundella, all the Dissenters, from Baines to Richards, would find themselves forced to oppose us, and they would be followed, or rather led, into the lobby by the Whigs, by Sir George Grey and Whitbread, and all our best friends, like Brand, would beg us to prevent a division which would break up the party."

Clearly, Mr. Forster, when he penned this memorandum, had no liking for the idea of carrying the bill by means of the votes of the Opposition and against those of his own party. After discussing the various amendments, he declared himself in favour of one proposed by Mr. Cowper Temple, which was virtually identical with his own suggestion to Lord Ripon in the letter of May 18th. By this amendment it was ordered that no catechism or religious formulary, distinctive of any particular denomination, should be taught in the public schools.

"It may be said," continued Mr. Forster, in his memorandum, "that this plan is unjust, inasmuch as it does not give the majority which prefers catechisms the same chance as the majority which does not, and it is insufficient because it still leaves the boards free to quarrel as to whether they will have the Scriptural teaching or purely secular, or the quasi-secular schools suggested by Richards. To the last objection the sole reply, and to my mind the sufficient reply, is that this plan will be acceptable to a large majority in the House and in the country, because by excluding the catechism it silences the rallying cries of controversy, and limits the range for dispute; and because it binds by Act of Parliament to have none of the theoretical character teaching which would naturally be given by the schoolmaster to young children in a common school, but to which the local bodies wish to be guided by Parliament.

"With regard to the majorities which decidedly prefer catechisms, especially the Catholics, I think we can and should meet their case. I confess I cannot but think this would have been easier to do if we had framed the bill in accordance with my original memorandum, and, prescribing Bible lessons as a rule, had then made allowance for exceptional localities desiring either purely secular or distinctive schools."

On June 16th the debate on the bill was at last resumed,

and Mr. Gladstone then made a statement which in substance was merely an amplification of Mr. Forster's suggestion. On one point, however, a proposal was made which is not to be found in Mr. Forster's memorandum. Forster, it will be remembered, had expressed himself in favour of limiting the aid from the rates to purely secular purposes. Mr. Gladstone now proposed that the local boards should not contribute to the voluntary schools under any circumstances whatever; but that those schools should be allowed to draw from the Exchequer instead of from the rates, and that an increased grant, suggested at fifty per cent. in addition to the grant then given, should be paid to the voluntary schools in lieu of any assistance from the local boards. From whom this proposal first came, it would be idle now to inquire. One thing, however, is clear—that it was not contained in the memorandum of suggested amendments to the bill which Mr. Forster submitted to Mr. Gladstone only four days before the latter spoke in the House. This increased grant to denominational schools was the point aimed at by the League in its attack upon the bill. An amendment refusing any increased grant to denominational schools, or payment for any religious instruction whatever, and in favour of universal compulsion, was proposed by Mr. Richards, and, after a prolonged debate, during which many speeches of great importance were made, it was defeated on June 24th by 421 votes to 60. Among the sixty who thus voted against the Ministry were to be found not a few of the leading Radicals in the House, including Mr. Forster's colleague, Mr. Miall, and his constituent, Mr. Alfred Illingworth.

In his diary Mr. Forster speaks of June 30th as the day on which the bill passed through its crisis. On that occasion Sir Stafford Northcote attacked the Government proposals for the exclusion of catechisms and religious formularies from the rate schools. The Government and their supporters were united in opposing Sir Stafford's amendment, and it was rejected by a large majority, the committee adhering to the ministerial proposals. The committee stage lasted until the 21st of July, and endless was the wrangling and disputation over that religious difficulty which practical experience has since shown to be to so large an extent imaginary.

It was whilst the Bill was in the crisis of its fate that a great change took place in the position of its author. Lord Clarendon's death had caused a vacancy in the Cabinet, and Mr. Forster was invited to take the vacant seat. In his diary he mentions that Mr. Gladstone asked him to walk from the

House with him, "and offered me in a very pleasant way a seat in the Cabinet, retaining my present position." This promotion, occurring at that particular moment, bore evidence to the success with which he had managed the bill up to this point in the House; and throughout the country it was regarded as merely a confirmation of the position he had now secured in the political world.

It was on July 22nd that the bill was read a third time and sent up to the House of Lords, and in a little more than a fortnight (August 9th, 1870) it had received the royal assent. Many changes had been introduced into it during its passage through Parliament, but its essential features—the division of the country into school districts, the ascertainment of the educational wants of each district, and the establishment of a system under which those wants should in due course be supplied—remained in the same shape as that in which they had been set forth in Mr. Forster's original memorandum. One notable feature of the debates must be mentioned. The 25th clause, which was hereafter to be the cause of so prolonged and bitter a struggle, passed through the House of Commons unnoticed and undebated. It was left for the lynx eye of some outsider to detect in it the germs of possible evil of the most serious kind.*

As not a little interest attaches to the changes which the bill underwent during its passage through Parliament, it will be well at this point briefly to indicate them. The first was the introduction of a time-table conscience clause, limiting to certain fixed hours the teaching of religion, and thus enabling parents, if they wished, to withhold their children from such instruction. The time allowed for the voluntary supply of the educational deficiencies of a district was reduced from the original "year of grace" to six months. The department was permitted at once to order the election of a school board, if a town council or the ratepayers desired it. It was provided that no distinctive catechism or religious formulary should be taught in any board school. The method originally suggested for the election of school boards, namely, by town councils and vestries, was changed, and the principle of popular election by the ratepayers and burgesses adopted. The cumulative vote and the ballot were introduced into the mode of election—the latter only applying, however, in the first instance to London. A single school board for London, with a paid chairman, was provided. The age for compulsory attendance was extended

* There were twenty-three divisions on the bill in the House of Commons, and six in the House of Lords.

by one year—from five to thirteen, instead of from five to twelve. It was prescribed that no grants for the building of voluntary schools should be made after December 31st, 1870. The provision originally found in the bill by which school boards were to be empowered to grant assistance to voluntary schools in their district, provided all such schools received assistance on equal terms, was omitted. It is not necessary to dwell on the importance of these changes, or to point to the obvious fact that in the main they were favourable to the public as opposed to the voluntary schools.

Among the men who rendered him invaluable assistance while the bill was passing through the House of Commons, mention must be made of Mr. Cumin and Mr. (now Sir Francis) Sandford. The latter eminent public servant still recalls, in connection with the passing of the bill, two of Mr. Forster's characteristics. One was his intense anxiety to get the principle of the bill—universal provision for education—carried in the House of Commons. In comparison with this, everything else seemed to him to be of small importance. "Once let me get the splinter-bar of the fifth clause through, and they may do what they like with the rest," was his frequent remark. He was willing to yield upon almost every other question—compulsion, denominational teaching, treatment of voluntary schools—so long as he could write upon the Statute-book a declaration in the name of Parliament that English children were henceforth to have everywhere the opportunity of being educated. The other characteristic recalled by Sir Francis was the unflagging energy and industry with which he worked, and expected everybody else to work when they were occupied with him. He would, when the bill was in committee, often be in his place in the House at three o'clock in the morning; yet after these late sittings he never failed to be at his desk in Eccleston Square or the Council Office as early as most of the clerks. Sometimes, indeed, if an amendment called for immediate consideration, he would invite Sir Francis to breakfast with him at nine o'clock, in order to consider a form of words which had only been suggested at two or three. Many men, of course, have worked as hard as Forster when holding high office. But in one respect he was exceptionally fortunate. He not only succeeded in getting his subordinates to work as hard as he himself did, but in infusing his own spirit of hopeful enthusiasm into them. Every man who was with him in the department during this stormy time was his sworn personal adherent, and not one but would have strained every nerve in order to aid him in his great task, so

deep and true was the attachment to himself which he had succeeded in evoking among the permanent officials.

It has been necessary to say something of the obstruction which Forster had to encounter whilst he was carrying his great measure through Parliament, and of the personal attacks to which he was subjected in many instances on the part of his own friends and supporters. It would be unfair, however, to lose sight of the other side. Whilst the supporters of the League openly denounced him as a traitor to the principles of his youth, and a time-server who had sacrificed his party to his own personal ambition, the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen rejoiced in the courage which had enabled him successfully to pilot his bill through the shoals and quicksands of committee. Above all there was a general feeling of thankfulness that he had been enabled to resist those who were anxious to give a purely secular character to the education of our young in the public schools. Many were the letters received from friends, known and unknown, congratulating him upon the fact that, owing to his exertions, the Bible and Bible-teaching were not to be excluded from our English schools.

Forster and his wife and children set off on a tour in Scotland immediately after the close of the session; but news of the dramatic catastrophe of Sedan reached them at Ballachulish, and he was compelled to hurry back to town to a meeting of the Cabinet.

Writing to Sir Arthur Helps, whilst on his way to Scotland (August 26th, 1870), he said—

“I have been much out of sorts since I left London, but am getting better. I do not like the look of things. I am not like you, a disbeliever in the future—I should give up politics if I were. But I fancy our immediate future is not pleasant.

“We have to get organization without losing freedom, and this is not easy. But what a grand task it is—to organize the English-speaking race. I wish all of us who have really lived twenty years—that is to say, who have not been wasting our experience for these last twenty years—could live them over again; but when I have become useful I shall wear out.”

It need hardly be said that it was the stirring events which were then happening on the Continent which renewed within him the ideas he had so long entertained as to the need for the organization and federation of the English-speaking races of the world.

In the month of October he went to Balmoral as minister

in attendance on the Queen. It was his first introduction to her Majesty in that capacity, and it marked the beginning of a personal intercourse with the sovereign which, throughout the rest of his life, was to Forster a source of unalloyed pleasure. The unique position of the Queen—a woman and the ruler of the greatest empire in the world—had always moved him with a sense of pathos, and inspired him with a feeling of chivalrous devotion to the throne. From the time when he first came in contact with her, as his knowledge of Her Majesty increased, and as his opportunities of serving her multiplied, his desire to do everything that lay within his power, to lighten for her by even the smallest degree the burden of the empire, became constantly more ardent. That the Queen herself appreciated this depth of loyal devotion was proved by the words which she addressed to his wife after his death.

Some extracts from his letters from Balmoral may be made without impropriety.

To his Wife.

“Perth, 8 a.m., Tuesday, October 11th, 1870.

“A short line, my dearest, before I leave Perth. I had a beautiful journey yesterday, though a cold one. The Darlington country takes me back curiously to my opening manhood. We had a beautiful steam across the Forth, but I have my doubts how Myles approved of it—he sat as though he was nailed to his chair. I had a good dinner here and a roast by the fire. No tidings of the Chancellor. This morning again it is clear, but cold; and, in fact, they have had little rain here, but hail and much snow on the mountains.

“I go on by 9.20 train.

“Thy loving husband,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

To his Wife.

“Balmoral Castle, October 11th, 1870.

“I reached here at 5.15, after a grand but cold drive over the hills twenty miles to Spital; then a change of carriage and lunch; then fifteen miles to Braemar—I walking up the hill, a stiff climb of 800 feet; a short shower on the top, with one of the finest rainbows I ever saw. Another change of carriage at Braemar, a cup of tea in the landlord’s room, and a quick drive of nine miles here through Colonel Farquharson’s

magnificent woods. . . . Myles opened his eyes, and shook his head somewhat at the hills; but in general he is philosophically unmoved, as if he was born to the purple."

"Wednesday morning, October 19th, 1870.

"I am just come in from a short inspection of Her Majesty's village school, built for forty or fifty children—attendance not complete till the Queen goes and winter comes. A young master fresh from Aberdeen University teaching the first class Latin and the lowest their letters. . . . During dinner the Queen gave me in a black envelope a photograph of the Crown Prince of Prussia, telling me it was his thirty-ninth birthday. When we went to Lochnagar, I tried, through one of the gillies, to get a collie. This has reached the Queen, and Lady Ely tells me she is going to give me a collie if she can find one. After dinner she favoured me with a long talk; and somehow, I do not know how, I told her about the children, which interested her. I told her, too, about my father and mother, and altogether she was most pleasant and kind. . . . The normal life here is breakfast at 9.30—all the household meals here are very punctual—letters and work till 2. Yesterday I tackled the revised code. The Queen drives out about 11.30, and again about 3.30. She does not return till past dark, nor do we. Then the second post comes in, with thy dear letters generally and the evening papers, and there is the possibility of the Queen wanting me before dinner. Everything is so quiet and silent that I have always to go through a mental process of proof that it is not Sunday. But telegrams and despatch-boxes all through the day are fired at our fortress from the rushing crowd without. . . .

"And now about plans. I leave by the messenger at 1 on Monday, probably with De Grey, who comes on Saturday night; Cardwell, who relieves me, coming, I expect, on Sunday morning. I am yet in doubt whether I get to thee on Tuesday evening, or whether I have to go straight to London and come to thee on Wednesday for two or three days before we return together."

"Balmoral Castle, October 20th, 1870.

"I must be short this morning, my dearest, as I have much office work before the messenger goes, and am in momentary expectation of telegrams. We were greatly agitated yesterday evening by a telegram from F. O. in cypher, saying that peace news had come from Brussels. May it be true! But I do not like its not being confirmed."

“Balmoral Castle, October 22nd, 1870.

“This must be a very short note, as I have been detained by work—F. O., Med., and Vet., till 12, and I am soon off on a real mountain walk with Collins, Prince Leopold’s tutor, and an active climber, having refused to go out deer shooting. . . . So far as I can see, my present plan is to arrive at Edinburgh at 10 p.m. on Monday. I have asked the Lord Advocate whether he cares to talk Scotch education between then and 10.20 next morning, when I tell him I must leave. This would bring me to Burley station at 5.18.

“Peace seems to me much more hopeful; any way, we are doing what we can.”

“Balmoral Castle, 8.30 a.m., October 23rd, 1870.

“On Sunday, the messenger leaves at 9, so I have but little time. Thy letter of the 21st I found on my return from a grand mountain walk with Collins and Dr. Fox last evening, in which, thanks to my alpenstock, I ran down the steep side of Lochnagar like a boy, and to-day am not stiff. . . . Cardwell turns up this morning—I suppose has arrived—and Harrison, the deputy-clerk of the Council, to-day. So to-morrow we declare the assent to the marriage* in form, and then De Grey and self, and I trust my dog, rush off with messenger; but where, I know not. That depends on whether there be a Cabinet on Tuesday, which also depends on the reply to our despatches. . . .”

The first school board elections took place in November, and Forster watched them with the closest interest and a well-founded confidence in the result of the legislation in which he had taken so great a part. In almost every case boards were elected, not for the purpose of squabbling over the religious difficulty, but in order to carry out the practical work of education, and to bring the children into the schools. There was one novel feature of the election which excited interest altogether apart from the question of education. This was the operation of the cumulative vote, which had been introduced into the bill during its passage through the House of Commons on the proposition of Lord Frederick Cavendish. Forster himself had not previously been in favour of the principle of so-called proportional representation, and the idea, so far as the Education Bill was concerned, was not his own. But when it had been adopted by the House, he was loyal and unyielding in defending it against all assailants. There can

* The marriage of the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne.

be no doubt that this mode of voting did secure for comparatively small denominations a full representation on the various boards; but it is equally indisputable that in some cases its effect was to enable minorities to overthrow majorities. It had also for a time the effect of preventing anything like organized action on the part of political parties in connection with school board contests. This result Forster regarded with unmitigated satisfaction, and the present writer can well recall the mingled anger and disgust which Mr. Forster displayed when discussing with him the success of an ingenious scheme adopted by the Liberals of Leeds for the purpose of enabling a school board election to be carried out on party lines. "We do not want party lines," said Mr. Forster, "in these elections; we want everybody, whether he belongs to a big party or a little one, to the Church of England or to the smallest Dissenting sect, to have his fair say in the choice of the people who are to manage the education of his children; and I think you Liberals of Leeds have behaved very badly in upsetting the original intention of Parliament when it passed the bill."

All this, however, lay in the future. In 1870, even in constituencies where the political forces were best organized, the cumulative vote was accepted on its merits, and the result was the election of boards remarkable for the ability, the public spirit, and the public worth represented by their members. To Forster's great delight, Lord Lawrence, ex-Viceroy of India, agreed to become chairman of the first School Board for London, and everywhere notable men came forward to assist in the great work.

Even the practical results which the bill secured through this election, however, failed to soften the rancour of the members of the League. The first serious blow which was struck at Mr. Forster after the elections took place was dealt by his own constituents at Bradford. The thanks which he received from those whom he represented in Parliament for having passed the Education Act was a vote of censure. He had not been warned of the intention of the extreme party to propose such a vote, and there can be no doubt that he felt it keenly, though in his diary he makes no comment upon the occurrence. There was a crowded meeting in the St. George's Hall, and Mr. Forster spoke for nearly two hours, a great portion of his speech being necessarily occupied with the questions raised by the war which was then raging in France. He concluded, however, by making some reference to the attacks which had been made upon him in connection with the Education Act. He had seen it stated, he said, that he

was less of a Radical than he had been before. "That is not a charge I mind. Like most men who have lived to my time of life, in private matters at any rate, perhaps in public, there are some charges I dislike, because I fear there may be some truth in them. But a charge which I know to be untrue I do not object to. In fact, I do not feel it. I never was more convinced than I am at this moment that, in dealing with the condition of England as it is at present, we must be unsparing in our efforts to root out abuses. . . . I trust that the day will never come in which a man in my position will for a moment change his views because he thinks that they cannot be palatable to a portion of his constituency. Now, you must not suppose that I think, upon this matter of education, that the feeling of the majority of my constituents differs from my own. I do not believe that it does; but I say if I believed it did, it would make no difference."

On sitting down after making this straightforward declaration, it became clear that a very large section of the meeting was hostile to him. When the usual vote thanking him for his services during the past year in Parliament was proposed, it was met by an amendment expressing disapproval of the Education Bill, and deeply deploring the means adopted for carrying it; in other words, the ammunition of Birmingham had been imported into Bradford for the purpose of wounding its distinguished representative in his own political home. The charge openly formulated against Mr. Forster by those who spoke in support of the amendment was, that in passing the Education Bill he had legislated for the majority of the country as a whole, and not for the majority of his own political supporters, and that in doing so he had betrayed that section of his party which had reposed the greatest trust in him. The hostile amendment was carried by a small majority.

Although taken by surprise, Mr. Forster was equal to the occasion. He had no complaint to make of those who repaid him in this manner for the work he had accomplished during the past year. "You have only done," he said, "what I have always expected Bradford people to do—to say what you think. Still, I believe the time will come, and that before long, when many of you will regret much that expression of opinion. I am quite sure that those children who by the help of this bill will get an education which they otherwise would not just now have obtained will, if this resolution be remembered afterwards, tell their parents who have voted for it that they ought not to have done so."

The Liberals of Bradford, as well as Englishmen generally,

are now in a position to decide whether the party which moved this vote of censure upon Mr. Forster or the man who carried the Education Act was in the right. Of the splendid results of the Act of 1870, the whole nation is now so fully conscious that figures are hardly necessary to convey it to the mind of the reader. On August 31st, 1886, the number of schools on the list for inspection under the Act in England and Wales had reached the total of 19,133. The number of scholars on the register was, in round numbers, four and a half millions, the average attendance being three and a half millions. In 1870, before the Act came into operation, the number of schools inspected was 8,281, the accommodation provided 1,878,584, the average attendance, 1,152,389, and the total number of teachers 28,000. In 1874, the numbers were: schools, 13,163; accommodation, 2,861,319; average attendance, 1,678,759; and teachers, 48,000. In 1886, they stood at: schools, 19,133; accommodation, 5,145,292; average attendance, 3,438,425; and teachers, 87,000. The percentage of the scholars examined to the estimated population of the country had risen from 2·86 in 1870 to 8·77 in 1886, and the number of school boards established in the latter year was 2,225. All this was achieved in Forster's lifetime.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE BIRMINGHAM LEAGUE.

“THERE is nothing that *riles* mankind so much as seeing the objects they desire accomplished by other means than their own. Thus the Radicals are as indignant at popular education being brought about with Conservative assistance as Mazzini and Garibaldi at the unity of Italy being brought about by Victor Emanuel. But the Mialls of England and Italy must submit to their lot. *Sic vos non vobis* is the law of the world.” It was Forster’s old friend, Lord Houghton, who wrote these lines—the *postscript* to a friendly note deploring the writer’s absence from home in January, 1871, at a time when Forster had offered himself for a few days at Fryston. The reader has seen how bitterly the author of the Education Act was being condemned by his old friends, even by his own constituents, because he had succeeded in accomplishing the great object for which all educationists had for years been striving. Every kind of evil motive was imputed to him by these, his former admirers and supporters. Ignorant of the fact that some of the features of the measure, which in their eyes were most objectionable, had been imported into the bill not only against Forster’s will, but in spite of his protests, they believed that he had gratuitously abandoned the principles he had professed up to the moment at which he took office.* Not knowing that to no two men in the Ministry had the idea of carrying the measure by Conservative votes been more repugnant than to Forster and Lord Ripon, they believed that the former deliberately preferred to win the applause of his opponents rather than the approval of his own friends. And he had to bear the brunt of it all alone. Birmingham stormed at him; Bradford upbraided; the Nonconformists suspected or detested him;

* In order to prevent any misconception, I should say that I refer chiefly to the question of compulsion.

philosophical Radicals wrote of him as "the great trimmer;" and the whole Radical party, with some honourable exceptions, looked upon him as a deserter, or something worse—a traitor. It is well that one should bear in mind the wise judgment of a cool-headed, warm-hearted cynic like Lord Houghton, who, without knowing the truth as to Forster's real opinions concerning the bill, could still clearly see the ludicrous side of the controversy raised by his antagonists.

Still, there was much that was painful to Forster in the attacks to which he was now being subjected; and though strangers imagined that his somewhat rough exterior made him impervious to any assaults, incapable of feeling even the most cruel misrepresentation, all who really knew him were aware that certain forms of attack occasioned him the keenest suffering. Especially was this the case if any one he had loved and trusted seemed to have turned against him. He did not expect the outer world to understand him, and was calmly stoical under attacks made in ignorance or under a misapprehension of his character and motives; but when those who knew him turned against him, the case was different. Here is a letter which he addressed to his old friend, Mr. Lloyd Jones, who had disclaimed any connection with a bitter attack which had been made upon him in a paper called the *Beehive*, with which Mr. Jones himself had some connection:—

"January 31st, 1870.

"DEAR MR. JONES,

"I am exceedingly glad to get your letter. I expect, of course, political opposition, and also, out of much opposition and alongside of it, my share of personal attack. But such only becomes painful if there is any reason to fear that it comes from any one I believed to be a friend. Some one sent me the *Beehive*, and I confess there was such a curious mixture of knowledge of my domestic life with spiteful lies, that, seeing you had something to do with the paper, I could not bear the possible suspicion that you had anything to do with the letter, and I was intending to write to you to have it all out. However, now the letter merely amuses me, as I cannot conceive that it comes from any one for whom I really care. It must be from some one who does not scruple to try to make professed friendship, and the free intercourse of hospitality, the means of giving a false accusation the appearance of truth; but any one so mean can do no real harm. If it gets to my dear old friend, Thomas Cooper, how indignant it will make him! . . . I hope you are well and comfortable. I wish

the busy rush of life would let us meet and have a quiet chat on matters on which we agree, and also on those on which we do not.

“Yours ever faithfully,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

“As you say,” he writes to an old personal friend, “I am abused just now; but it does not try my temper, though for a time I fear this rancour may diminish my power of usefulness. I was *hurt* by ——’s conduct; but, having let him know this, I am content. Keep a look-out for me as to the real working of the Act. . . . I agree with you there is a gale ahead, and our good ship has her timbers strained. Would that I was a more able seaman; but one thing is clear—one must not desert the ship.” Again he writes later on to the same friend: “*Thank* you for your letter—inspiring and comforting. I can honestly say I believe I shall try to do what is right, regardless of the consequences to myself. If religion is to be separated by Act of Parliament from any part of the daily life of Englishmen, much more of English children, it shall not be done by me—nor, if I can help it, by any one else without the English people declaring what they will on the matter. If they so decide, I suppose it must be; but the responsibility shall rest with them, and I do not believe they will assume it.”

Why do I dwell at such length upon these attacks? my reader may ask. Are not all public men subjected to a similar fate? To a certain degree they are; but these attacks upon Mr. Forster, and his subsequent unpopularity with a section of his own party, were not merely the reward which he received at the moment for having got the children of England into school. They were maintained with singular persistency for years, and they had much to do in determining not only his own political career, but the course of public events in this country.

Mr. Bright, though he had been a member of the Cabinet when the Education Bill was under consideration, was one of those who shared the views of the Birmingham League on the questions at issue. He was at this time in ill health, and had been compelled in consequence to withdraw from the Government.

“There is much hot water in Birmingham on the education question,” he wrote (March 5th, 1871). “I wish you would do something to soften the feeling there. I send you a letter, not a pleasant one for you, but I wish you to know the truth.

It is from one of the most able and influential men there—Mr. Dale, minister of the Independents. He does not know that I send it to you. Pray read it, and don't be angry with it, but do what you can to meet the suspicion and hostile feeling which it expresses. I know little of the bill, except that I think the cumulative vote monstrous and intolerable. Here (Rochdale) we have a Catholic priest at the head of the poll, and the minority in many places are in power, and doing their best to thwart the objects of the bill. I suspect the haste with which the measure was passed has done much to weaken the Government with the Liberals in the country. . . . Forgive this criticism, which I write with grief, but with all sincerity."

MR. FORSTER to MR. BRIGHT.

"Education Department,
"March 7th, 1871

"MY DEAR BRIGHT,

"I am very glad to see your handwriting, though the subject on which you write is not of the pleasantest. I return you Mr. Dale's letter. So far as I know, it is the first sign of wish expressed by him or any of his friends, with regard to the Birmingham inspection. I often talk to Dixon on educational matters. I wonder he has said nothing to me about it. I should gladly have listened to Mr. Dale on the matter, and I cannot but think his suspicion that I would not do so is not worthy either of him or me. But let that pass. To incur undeserved suspicion is part of our daily work. . . . I need not tell you what grief it is to me that some of our friends dislike the Education Act; but if I had to go through last year's work again, I could not act otherwise. I never felt more clearly in any public matter that I was doing what I thought to be right, and not what I thought to be wrong. I do not think we can say that the Act was passed in a hurry. It took twenty-three days in the Commons—exactly the same number as the Irish Land Bill. As regards the cumulative vote, it was not proposed by the Government; there was no division against it, and it was supported as much by our side as the others, amongst others by Winterbotham, and not opposed on behalf of the Dissenters or the League. In Birmingham, I see it has resulted in the probable majority of the ratepayers being in a minority in the board; but that was because they tried to elect the whole board. The polling showed clearly they could have elected a majority. In many places, London especially, it is clear that those who think with the League owe to it their return.

“I am rejoiced to hear you are gaining strength, and long to see you back in the House, even though below the gangway. For myself, what with incessant work, the weariness of debates, and the unpleasantness of suspicion, I am getting tired; and if this year I can get my Education Act to work, pass my Ballot Bill, and, above all, get De Grey back from the States with the Alabama question solved, I do not care how soon either Disraeli or Mr. Dale turn us out.

“Yours ever faithfully,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

The work of the session of 1871 was exceptionally severe so far as Forster was concerned, and it would have tried him even if there had not been this great feud with the Nonconformists and the Leaguers to occupy his thoughts and strain his nerves. Lord Ripon had gone to the United States to settle a new Alabama Treaty (in a subsequent chapter Forster's part in the political relations of England and America at this time will receive due attention); there was a bad outbreak of cattle plague, which called both for administrative and legislative work; there was a Scotch Education Bill to be carried, in fulfilment of a promise made the previous year; and, above all, the Ballot Bill which had been committed to his charge had to be introduced and piloted through the House of Commons. On the question of secret voting, he, like other men, had seen reason to change his early opinions. Though he might still think, as he had thought when he was reasoning with the Chartists of Bradford in 1848, that it was better for an Englishman to record his vote in the open light of day, he had been driven to the conclusion that for practical purposes, for the prevention of intimidation, and for securing the purity of election, the ballot had become necessary. He was anxious, when entrusted with the measure, to make the system of voting which it prescribed one of real secrecy, and he devoted much of his time to the study of the ballots adopted in other countries and in the colonies, in order that he might give the electors of the United Kingdom a system which should be at once simple and secure. There is no need to say that the result of his efforts in this direction was satisfactory. The ballot now in use in this country, and for which we are indebted to Mr. Forster, has at least the merit of being eminently practical as a method of recording votes without giving publicity to the opinions of the voters save under circumstances of a special nature. But 1871 was not to witness the passing of the Ballot Act, and very early after the intro-

duction of the measure, on February 20th, the suspicions of its friends were roused not merely as to its fate in the House of Lords, but as to the earnestness of ministers regarding it. Among others, Mr. Bright, who was still prevented by the state of his health from attending the House of Commons, wrote to Forster, protesting against the indifference which, as he believed, ministers were displaying with regard to their bill and to other measures of a Radical character. "My friends here asked me," he said, "What is the good of having two professed Radicals in the Cabinet? To which I can give no answer."

MR. FORSTER to MR. BRIGHT.

"80, Eccleston Square, London,
"April 26th, 1871.

"MY DEAR BRIGHT,

"Your old member of the House must be either somewhat suspicious or very credulous; and if he really supposes that the Ballot Bill will be shunted for Local Taxation or Licensing, he cannot have learnt by his experience how to test a *canard*. Such a notion has never been even entertained by the Government. Gladstone has repeatedly in the House said that Ballot comes next to the Army Regulation Bill, and I should not have taken charge of it if I had not known that the Government meant to pass it. For myself, I see, as you do, the dangers of postponement, and am as anxious and determined to get it through this year as I was to get the Education Bill through last year.

"You say that you can give no answer to the question—What is the good of having Stansfeld and myself in the Cabinet? You know that is a question I cannot even attempt to answer.

"I will show your jobation to Stansfeld. He was not in the Cabinet when the army estimates were agreed to; but as I *was*, I do not feel it honest to answer your letter without saying this much, that I fully concurred in them.

"I think we were right both as regards men and stores, and that the destruction of purchase is worth its cost; but I also think that we ought to subject the army to a searching reform, which reform will be much more possible when purchase is destroyed.

"Trusting you continue better,

"I am,

"Yours ever faithfully,

"W. E. FORSTER."

It is not uninteresting to quote, in connection with this period of excessive work, and of worry and anxiety which were at least in proportion to the work, a fragment of conversation at a dinner-party preserved by Mrs. Forster. "Mr. T—— said that A—— H—— was always going about asking people what was the ideal towards which they were working, and there was a laugh at the notion. But my dear husband did not join in it, saying that, for his part, if he was not constantly thinking of the ideal which he was working up to, he should not be able to get on at all." A record of two days' work, as given in his diary at this time, will show something of the conditions under which he strove to "work up to his ideal" of the duty of an English statesman.

March 9th.—A day of deputations. Council to prohibit importation of French and Belgian cattle. National Union deputation at 12. Royal Humane Society for teaching swimming at 1.30. Musical men with Sir R. Peel at 2. Lord Howard and Allies at 3.30; all on code: House; questions."

March 10th.—Busy preparing code speech. Called on Gladstone, arranged for Committee of Council at 3.30 on proposed alterations of code; Gladstone, Lowe, and self at first; then Halifax and Bruce. I carried my alterations. Code debate began about 6. I spoke at end for hour and half. House very impatient towards end, and no wonder. A *warning*. Dixon divided against me, but soundly beat."

The Ballot Bill was carried successfully through the House of Commons. In carrying it Forster had to fight practically single-handed, and he had to do his work whilst literally oppressed by the labours of the department, in which the questions connected with the management or foundation of the new schools, complaints regarding the reports of particular inspectors, or the manner in which the code affected certain classes of scholars, and all the details of the Scotch Education Bill were for ever jostling questions about the vaccination laws and the importation of foreign cattle. It says much for any man's capacity for work that he should be able to pass successfully through the ordeal of the Vice-Presidency of the Council. Never, however, was that ordeal so severe as it was in the year 1871, immediately after the passing of the Education Act, and whilst hundreds of new school boards were being established throughout the country. Nothing but the severe training both to public work and to business habits which Mr. Forster had gone through could have enabled him to endure the strain now put upon him. So far as the Ballot Bill was concerned, though he gained great praise on both sides of the

House for the manner in which he piloted it through its difficulties, his labours were in vain. After eighteen sittings in committee, and long debates upon the other stages of the measure, he had the mortification of seeing the bill thrown out by the peers.

In the autumn the unsleeping hostility of the Nonconformists of the League became more pronounced. He had given such proof of his capacity both as legislator and administrator during the session, that men were openly discussing his right to the succession to the leadership in the event of Mr. Gladstone's retirement. The brilliant success of the Education Act as an educational measure—the tautology must be forgiven, for without it one could not express the truth—and the growing popularity and power which he enjoyed in Parliament, marked him out for the highest political distinction. Perhaps it was this consciousness of his growth in power that stirred up those who had once been his friends, but who had been estranged from him on the question of education, to renewed efforts to thwart his policy, and to punish him for what they regarded as his apostasy. The 25th clause had been discovered by this time. That simple provision, inserted in the measure without thought of possible harm either on the part of Mr. Forster or the Leaguers themselves, for the purpose of enabling those parents who, though not absolutely paupers, were too poor to pay the school fees to get their children into school, had now become the battle-cry of a party. Half the platforms of England were ringing with denunciation of the clause and of its author. The Birmingham party, in their attacks upon the bill, seemed bent upon concentrating on the head of Mr. Forster the whole of their virulent hostility. His assailants distinguished between him and his colleagues, and vigorous attempts were made to induce the Cabinet as a whole to treat him as a Jonah.

Comparatively brief as is the period which has elapsed since those days, it is difficult even now to understand the bitterness of the personal hostility with which Mr. Forster was thus pursued. To some extent it was no doubt due to certain characteristics of his manner, which gave offence to those who judged him merely by external appearances. I have already said that many of those who assailed him most bitterly and unfairly had no conception that in doing so they were causing him any pain. He did not wear his heart upon his sleeve, and he would sit silent, and to all outward seeming unmoved, under the most venomous assaults. His very capacity for concealing his own sufferings, and the delicate

sensitiveness of his nature, seemed to add to the anger of his opponents, for whom this excuse must at least be made—that they had once loved and trusted him as strongly as they now hated and suspected him. Then, again, it was unfortunate for him that, amid his many absorbing pre-occupations and anxieties, he could not command that light and easy manner which in superficial society passes current for politeness. If he was pressed in private, by some member who caught him in the lobby or the club, with a troublesome or it might be simply an unnecessary question, at a time when his thoughts were occupied with the grave and pressing duties of his office, he did not always show the patience that his interlocutor expected of him. Sometimes he would brush a troublesome questioner aside without thinking of his feelings. Intentionally discourteous he never was to any human being; and when he heard—as he sometimes did—that so and so had been wounded by the bluntness of his manner, he would show first surprise, and then the keenest concern.

In connection with this matter, I may be allowed to mention one of my own reminiscences of my intercourse with Mr. Forster. He came to see me at a time when he was being harassed even more severely than was usually the case, and when the attacks of one of his so-called friends upon him were of a specially malignant character. "Well," he said thoughtfully, after talking the matter over for some time, "I feel almost inclined to make up my mind to cut — the next time I meet him in the streets or at the club. I never did such a thing in my life before, and I do not like doing it now; but what can one do when a man professes the greatest personal friendship in private, and yet says such things as these of men in public?" It was difficult to refrain from smiling when Mr. Forster thus solemnly, and with a lingering regretfulness in his tones, announced that he might be driven to take this extreme step, for it happened to be within my knowledge that the person of whom he spoke was under the distinct impression that for months previously Forster had deliberately and of malice aforethought ignored his existence whenever they chanced to meet. Forster himself was absolutely unconscious all the time of having committed this offence. The truth is, that he suffered from shortness of sight, and over and over again would pass close to his dearest friends without being aware of his nearness to them. It is hardly to be wondered at that persons who were either on the outlook for some cause of offence, or who were conscious that their own actions had not been altogether friendly towards

Forster, should mistake that which was the merest accident for a deliberate insult.

There was another reason for the special bitterness with which he was assailed in some quarters. If he had long ago dropped the "plain speech" of the Society of Friends, save in his conversation with those of his own family who belonged to the body, he had never lost the habit of speaking out very frankly when he felt that he had reason for finding fault with any one. "You and your people are behaving very badly just now," was an expression he not unfrequently used in conversation, and though it was manifestly the utterance of a man who was simply opening his mind without thought of malice or ill-will, its bluntness was apt to offend those especially who had a great belief in their own infallibility. It would not do to hide the truth on these points from the reader in speaking of that continuous and unrelenting opposition, amounting to something very like persecution, to which Mr. Forster was at this time subjected at the hands of the coterie of politicians who had made Birmingham their headquarters.

There were, however, not a few men among the Nonconformists who, though regretting that the Education Act had not done all that they wished on behalf of religious equality, were convinced of Mr. Forster's personal honesty and of the reality of his enthusiasm on behalf of education. Some of these were very anxious to bring about a reconciliation between the author of the Act and the representatives of the League. Among these persons was the Rev. Newman Hall, the well-known Congregational minister. Mr. Newman Hall, on behalf of the Dissenters, had asked Mr. Gladstone to meet a small number of gentlemen at his house to discuss the burning question. The result of that interview had been "to make all present feel how great were the difficulties which beset the question from the statesman's standpoint," and it had also led to a suggestion that an interview between the leading Nonconformist opponents of the Act and Mr. Forster might be beneficial. Accordingly, on November 13th Mr. Hall wrote, inviting Mr. Forster to meet Mr. Miall, Mr. Richard, Mr. Dale, of Birmingham, and other leading supporters of the League, at his house.

The next day Mr. Forster wrote to Mr. Hall as follows:—
"Your proposal is most kindly meant, and just like yourself, and I should be most glad if by accepting it I could do anything to lessen misunderstanding or remove misconceptions, of which there are many. As to whether, however, such a

meeting as you suggest would really do good, I think you and I could best judge by first talking the matter over together."

To his Wife.

"November 25th, 1871.

"I have just had a long call from Newman Hall, and, after telling him that he must understand that whilst I did not seek the interview, yet I would not avoid it on the understanding that I was not trapped or quoted, I said I doubted much good coming, as there was a personal set at me, partly from feeling and partly in hope of getting over Gladstone. However, it was fixed I should go to his house at eight on Friday evening, December 8th. He named Miall, whom I should like to see, and Dale. . . . I told him I could prove to any reasonable person I had worked the Act fairly, and in fact had a pleasant talk with him; but I do not suppose that comes to much. . . . (*November 27th*) I fear I cannot come down till Thursday. I am very busy: ballot, corrupt practices, education, cattle—all in a heap together. . . . (*November 28th*) I had a satisfactory but desperately cold inspection of the cattle market. I shall try to come down on Thursday, but I am desperately worked. . . . I have had a bad, ungentlemanly letter from —, and his lies about me in his second speech at Newcastle are astounding. I began to answer them, but I have given it up, and merely send him a cool challenge to meet me in Parliament, with a regret that his feeling of what is due to courtesy has not made him try to find out whether such discussions could not be avoided."

In due time the meeting at Mr. Newman Hall's house took place. Two of the representatives of the League invited to attend declined the invitation, though they happened to be two of those who had brought the strongest accusations against him on the platform. They were his colleague in the representation of Bradford, Mr. Miall, and Mr. Henry Richard. Among those who did come to meet Mr. Forster in free discussion upon a subject on which they had such serious differences of opinion were Mr. Dale, Mr. Arthur, Mr. Clayden, Mr. Binney, Mr. Samuel Morley, and Dr. Raleigh. The meeting was a friendly one, and the discussion lasted until nearly midnight. It cannot be said, however, to have reconciled the League party either to the Education Act or to its author. How bitter were their feelings at this time may be

gathered from a sentence uttered by Sir Charles Dilke in one of his speeches, in which he declared that "one might suppose that the Education Department was presided over by the powers of darkness instead of by good men like Sir Francis Sandford and Mr. Forster." The accusations against Mr. Forster now included not merely the nature of the Act itself, but the manner in which the Education Department was being administered. So completely had some of his opponents been blinded by their anger that they conceived him to have entered into some league for the purpose of giving the Church party and the Denominationalists an unjust advantage over the Secularists, so that even a member of Parliament did not think it unworthy of his position to compare Forster and his principal assistant to the powers of darkness. There was some consolation for the object of this virulent abuse in the fact that by the end of 1871 no fewer than three hundred school boards had been formed, and that on every side school-houses could be seen rising to bear witness to that national outburst of zeal on behalf of education which had been the immediate result of the passing of the Act of 1870. Nor to a man of Forster's sensitiveness was it a small thing that he had been fortunate enough to win, to no ordinary extent, the confidence of those who were his colleagues and subordinates in the Privy Council Office. One of the most distinguished of these, Sir Arthur Helps, addresses him as follows:—

"Leigh Park, Havant,
"Christmas Day, 1871.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"I wish most heartily that this may be a merry and a happy day to you and yours. I am almost sure that where you are it will be a happy day for those who surround you, as you have the gift (be careful never to lose it) of entering into everything that may amuse others and yourself.

"You are one of the few men who are worthy of being indoctrinated into the mysteries of that most difficult game of Patience that I play. N—— and I spent an evening together a little time ago. We played Patience all the time, and were ignominiously beaten by the board. As he rose up, at a ghostly hour of the night, he exclaimed, 'The War Office work is nothing when compared to this!' However, it was not to chatter to you about such things that I began this letter.

"I wanted to take an opportunity of telling you how grateful our office, from the highest to the lowest amongst us, is to you for the very kind and appreciative manner in which

you have treated us. In the natural course of things, you will some day or other leave us ; but the whole office will feel that wherever you may be, whatever position you may fill, you will be a true and constant friend to us.

“ Now, the other day you gave great comfort to —— (than whom a more devoted man to the public service I never met with), in showing him that you knew and appreciated his labours. And the same with all the rest of us. Without more words, I know that every one of them would join with me, if they were now by my side, in wishing you, in the most earnest and sincere manner, every good wish of the season. Please remember me very kindly to Mrs. Forster, and believe me to be,

“ Always yours,

“ ARTHUR HELPS.”

It was recognition of this kind—the frank expression of confidence and goodwill on the part of those nearest to him—that in Forster's opinion outweighed all the applause of the public outside. Nor was it only among his friends in the office that he was appreciated at his true worth. One of his colleagues in the Government remembers how one day, when some question of education was to be considered at the Cabinet, Mr. Forster happened to be late and kept ministers waiting. Mr. Gladstone seized the opportunity, and “ quite burst out ” in praise of the Vice-President of the Council, dwelling specially upon that quality in the man of the existence of which the outer world knew nothing—his tenderness.

Friendship and goodwill of this description afforded him great comfort under the unceasing attacks which were now being directed against him by his opponents. One of their leaders had been pleased to declare that he had betrayed the Nonconformists for ambition, and Forster had been moved to write to him to ask for some proof of the accusation. None, of course, was forthcoming, but the statement showed to what lengths his opponents were ready to go. And yet what was their chief charge against him ? It was formulated early in the session of 1872, when Mr. Dixon led an attack upon him and upon his Act, set forth in six resolutions. The first two of these resolutions complained of the failure of the Act to secure the general election of school boards and compulsory attendance. As a matter of fact, Mr. Forster was in favour of both these measures, though he had that keen sense of what was and what was not practicable in which his Birmingham assailants were so signally deficient. The other resolution

attacked the 25th clause, and the employment of public money, as was alleged, for the teaching of denominationalism. The real point at issue, so far as these latter objections were concerned, was whether a poor parent, who was unable to pay his child's school fees, was to be at liberty to choose between a denominational and secular school, or was to be compelled to send the child to a school of the latter description. Forster stood as resolutely in defence of the right of the poor parent to make his choice among available schools, as he had done in defence of the inclusion of the Bible in the schools. He stated, however, that next year (1873) he hoped to be able to bring in a Compulsory Act, as by that time a sufficient amount of school-accommodation would have been provided to prevent such an Act becoming a mere dead letter. The attack of the League party was beaten off by a large majority; but their sullen resentment against the bill and its author was maintained.

The reader is probably by this time not a little wearied by the story of the long controversy; yet Mr. Forster's part in securing the education of the English people cannot be understood if that controversy is not followed to its end. It must be remembered that, as he himself said in a letter quoted on a previous page, a "set" was made against him personally. The members of the League were incessantly striving to detach his colleagues, and above all Mr. Gladstone, from him. Few men have had to fight under greater disadvantages than those with which he had to contend during the last two years of the life of the Ministry of 1868; nor was his position made more tolerable by the fact that he was compelled at times as a minister to defend and accept the responsibility for decisions which were not his own, but those of his colleagues in the Cabinet—some of the very men whom the Leaguers held up to public approval for their fidelity to principles which Forster was supposed to have betrayed.

He had expressed a hope that compulsion might be introduced in 1873, and he was determined that, if it rested with himself, this hope should be realized. On October 8th, 1872, he addressed the following letter to Mr. Gladstone:—

"Education Department, Whitehall.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I find myself so unwell I must go home to-day, and I do not expect to be able to come up to Cabinets early next week. I do not suppose you will fix before November the bills of secondary importance; but I ought to say that

when the time comes for considering them, I shall have to say that I do not think we shall have to do without an amending Education Act dealing with the compulsory question and the 25th clause.

" Yours very truly,
" W. E. FORSTER."

The Cabinet consented to his preparing such a bill as he suggested, and he forthwith set to work to draft it. Its varying fortunes are set forth in the following extracts from his correspondence :—

To his Wife.

" Education Department, Whitehall,
" January 18th, 1873.

" It is now 5.30, and, with the exception of what time I passed in a cab, I have been hard at work since 9.45, so my head somewhat runs round. On the whole, however, I have made way, I think. I very much improved and shortened the draft bill with Jenkyns to-day, and I really think we sketched good compulsory clauses, both rural and other. (*January 23rd, 1873, Privy Council Office*) I think it probable that the Cabinet will decide my fate to-morrow, as Gladstone, after having read my memorandum, wishes to have the matter settled at once. (*January 24th, 1873, Privy Council Office*), I must, though under great pressure, write thee a word or two before the Cabinet meets, but I will keep my note open to say what is my fate. Ripon and I go into the discussion entirely agreeing and perfectly willing to support one another, which is a comfort. After all, I should not be surprised if I do not come on until Monday. (6 p.m.) I just began to open my case, when it turned out that the Cabinet had dwindled, so Gladstone said I had better put it off till Monday. . . . I have arranged with Gladstone to call on him at 11.30, and with Kimberley and Halifax to come to me at 2.30 to-morrow about the agricultural clauses. It is quite as well I am put off. (*Sunday, Athenæum Club*) I take advantage of the Foreign Office post to send thee a line. . . . I have good hopes I shall get through the Cabinet to-morrow; and, indeed, I am getting more hopeful about the session, though I shall have to receive and give some hard knocks. I hope to-morrow to write definitely about plans. I go to Osborne early on Monday, and return, I suppose, for Cabinet on Wednesday. (*January 27th, 1873, 5.45 p.m.*) The discussion just over;

the hardest job I ever had. Many times I thought I was beat, but the upshot is, I have carried the bill as proposed, except that part of the 17th clause stands, which orders fees to be paid, and only the remission part is repealed; and after age of labour has begun, I am to be as lenient as possible in my compulsory provisions, especially in rural districts. It has been a desperate fight. Ripon backed me nobly; so did Bruce, Kimberley, and Halifax. (*January 29th, 1873, 10, Downing Street, Whitehall*) I got here about 3.30, an hour after the Cabinet. My visit to Osborne was very interesting, but I fear it must keep till we meet. I saw much of the Queen, who was in good spirits and most pleasant. She wanted to see me again this morning, so I had the yacht to bring me across. It was a cold business, but I have got warm now."

It will be gathered from the foregoing that the Cabinet was by no means united on the subject of compulsory education, and that a hard fight was needed to enable Mr. Forster to carry that proposal which, in the opinion of the League, he ought to have carried three years earlier. But the troubles of the measure were by no means over when Forster won his victory in the Cabinet. Parliament, which had now existed for more than four years, was becoming demoralized. It had carried many great measures, though none greater than the Education Act. Now it seemed to have lost its energy, and ministers had undoubtedly lost their command over the once-docile majority in the House of Commons. On March 11th, the Irish University Bill of the Government was defeated by a majority of three. It was the first serious defeat which ministers had so far sustained. In his diary, Forster says, "Gladstone rose with the House dead against him and his bill, and made a wonderful speech, easy, almost playful, with passages of great power and eloquence, but with a graceful play which enabled him to plant deep his daggers of satire in Horsman, Fitzmaurice, and Co. Then came the division, very doubtful, but we were beaten by three."

Ministers at once resigned; and two days afterwards, March 13th, a final Cabinet was held, at which an interesting scene occurred.

Diary.

"*March 13th.*—Cabinet again at 12. Decided to resign; on the whole I think Gladstone now for resignation. Outside opinion, and such opinions as Monsell's and Baxter's, very

strongly for resignation. Gladstone made us quite a touching little speech; he began playfully—this was the last of some 150 Cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what ‘profound gratitude’—and then he completely broke down and could say nothing, except that he could not enter on the details. He thanked each and all of us for consideration, etc., without any exception, and he might add, without any distinction; and then said how we had debated every question as though we were outside. Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched. . . . At the House Gladstone made his short statement. Crawford asked about Emanuel. I shortly explained what would be done, and, after a few chaffing words from Osborne, we adjourned till Monday, and I went home a resigned minister. I forgot to say that Gladstone saw the Queen between Cabinet and House, and tendered our resignation, which her Majesty accepted.”

The resignation did not, however, take effect. Mr. Disraeli was unable to form an administration, and Mr. Gladstone resumed office. Naturally, what had happened had shaken them greatly, and Forster’s Education Bill had to suffer from the shock. The Nonconformists of the League now had a spokesman in the Ministry, in the person of Mr. Winterbotham, a young member who had distinguished himself, both by the ability and the bitterness of his attacks upon the bill when it had first been introduced, and who now occupied a subordinate place in the Government. He was pressing upon Mr. Gladstone the view that, although the League were so strongly in favour of the principle of compulsion, they wished that no compulsion should be applied where parents were unable to pay for the schooling of their children, or where they had conscientious objections to the schools open to them. This was by way of defeating the proposal contained in Forster’s bill for putting an end to the miserable battle over the 25th clause. This proposal was that boards of guardians should pay the school fees from the rates where parents were unable to pay, giving liberty to the parent to choose the school to which his child was to be sent. Beset on the one side by the out-and-out opponents of compulsion, and on the other by the League, which had thus made compulsion a secondary matter, compared with that of the denominational schools, it is not surprising that Mr. Gladstone should have felt anxious to avoid the question altogether. The struggle which now took place within the Cabinet, though short, was very sharp.

To LORD RIPON.

“ Education Department, Whitehall
“ April 2nd, 1873.

“ MY DEAR RIPON,

“ As you are going to see Mr. Gladstone upon the most perplexed question of the Education Bill, I think it may save time if I dictate my last thought on the matter. In what I say, I must be considered to reserve the freedom to do my best to convince both Mr. Gladstone and the Cabinet that it would be unwise not to adhere to the decision which had been made to bring in the bill with compulsion. Time, however, so presses that I must be prepared for the possibility of the Cabinet giving up its previous decision.

“ My first feeling was to beg to be released from my position, rather than bring in a bill which I felt to be a mistake. But as things stand just now, with the enemy at the gates, I suppose no officer ought to desert his post, even if ordered to dig a grave for his own reputation, and to bury in it what seems to him the best plan of defence. There remains, however, the question of the probability of carrying the second reading of a bill without compulsion ; and I have thought this so doubtful, that I have been looking to see how we could do without any bill at all.

“ But there are many reasons against this.

“ 1. The agitation against the 25th clause demands a settlement. We have no right to allow town councils and school boards to be fighting longer than we can help.

“ 2. It is due to our friends, such as Dent, Baines, Andrew Johnston, etc., to protect them by some settlement against the violent Nonconformists.

“ 3. We are so pledged by the Queen’s speech, and by our action up to the crisis, that it will be a most damaging confession of weakness to say now that we will not bring in a bill, when there is no change but the crisis.

“ 4. There are several amendments of the Act of real administrative importance which ought at once to be made.

“ I have, therefore, been again racking my brain to consider how I could hope to get the second reading of a bill without compulsion, and yet dealing with the 25th clause.

“ I am sure no amendment of that clause would have a chance of success. Both sides would probably unite against an amendment ; and, in fact, the only chance seems to me to be, first its abolition, and then the substitution for it of a plan which would have some support from the Opposition. I enclose words which might fulfil this condition.

Without doubt they would be opposed by the League and by Miall and Co. But inasmuch as they merely provide that the guardians should enable the really destitute parent to pay for secular instruction, which he is ordered to provide for his child, I do not think the House would support them in their opposition.

"I had a long talk with Bright this afternoon, who, as I told you, wished to see me on the bill. His plan is Lowe's, viz. to oblige all public elementary schools to admit without fee the destitute children. He is friendly in tone, but I should have to calculate on a speech from him in favour of this plan, which might be damaging. He told me that Birmingham men, representing both the League and the Nonconformists, had seen him yesterday, and were both very strong for compulsion, and I think the House would not, in that case, refuse me a second reading. But I have so often told you in what manner I think I ought to propose the bill that I will not dwell further on that.

"I must only add, that if I bring in the bill without compulsion, I must be allowed to say that I have fulfilled the promise which I twice made in the House last year—that I would this year ask my colleagues to consent to it.

"Yours ever faithfully,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"P.S.—I ought to add that I think we are too deeply pledged to be able to avoid bringing in a Ballot Bill for the school boards in the rural parishes."

The enclosure in this letter was the draft of the proposal to enable the boards of guardians to pay the school fees for indigent parents, such payment not to be considered as parochial relief.

On April 5th the Cabinet met, and decided, greatly to Forster's regret, that the compulsory clauses of the bill should be dropped. He thus lost, as it turned out for ever, the opportunity of completing, in accordance with his original design, the edifice of a national system of education. The reader is now, however, able to decide for himself the extent to which Mr. Forster was personally responsible for the failure to make the Education Act of 1870 a compulsory one. The fight over the Amendment Bill was a severe one, but in the end Mr. Forster carried his point—the Act providing that no relief should be given for the maintenance of any child between five and thirteen unless the said child was receiving an elementary education. Any such relief, it was further

provided, was not to be granted or refused on condition of the child attending any public elementary school other than such as might be selected by the parent.

The next, and happily the last, phase of the controversy, with which the reader need be troubled at any length, was one of a somewhat novel character. Mr. Bright had been compelled through illness to retire from the Ministry early in 1870. In the autumn of 1873, having happily recovered from his serious indisposition, he again became a member of the Government, accepting the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. On October 22nd he addressed his constituents at Birmingham, and took occasion not only to repudiate the Education Act—which had been introduced into the Cabinet whilst he was still a member of it—but to make a strong attack upon those responsible for it. The blow was, it need hardly be said, a severe one for Mr. Forster. It was all the more severe because it came from a man for whom Forster himself had always entertained a profound affection and admiration, and with whom he had long been upon terms of the most confidential intimacy. That Mr. Bright held strong views in favour of the policy of the Birmingham League was notorious, and neither Mr. Forster nor any one else could have complained, however emphatic might have been the expression given to those views, whilst Mr. Bright was in the position of a private member. There was, however, general surprise at his action in making use of the very first occasion on which he spoke as a minister to denounce one of the chief legislative achievements of the Government, and by implication to condemn the Cabinet in general and Mr. Forster in particular. Such an attack upon a colleague was almost if not altogether without precedent, and for a time it occasioned something like consternation among the friends of the Government, though it filled the Tories and the extreme members of the League with delight.

There is no need to enter into a discussion as to the merits of the questions in dispute between Mr. Bright and his colleagues. As a matter of fact, Mr. Bright's description of the bill as introduced into the Cabinet, of which he expressed approval, was inaccurate; and equally inaccurate was his description of the character of the amendments—to which he objected—that had been made subsequently in the measure. It would be unfair to Mr. Bright himself, however, not to remember that by his own acknowledgment his recollection of the events which preceded his illness was very imperfect. It would have been an easy matter for Mr. Forster to establish

this, and to vindicate himself completely from the attack so unexpectedly made upon him. He was urged by not a few of his friends to deal with Mr. Bright as with an open and uncompromising foe. There were others who urged upon him the duty of instant resignation as the most emphatic mode of protest against the attack. To none of these counsels did he listen. He kept his temper and maintained his old respect for his distinguished colleague, leaving it for others to point out, as they speedily did, that Mr. Bright's attack upon him was based upon some strange misconception of his own attitude towards the measure when it was first introduced. The controversy is dead and buried now, and, instead of reopening it and showing—as might easily be done—that the amendments of the bill in its passage through the House of Commons were more favourable to the Nonconformists than to the Church party, it will be more interesting to show the spirit in which Forster dealt with the action of his colleague, of which he was bound to take some notice, for the sake of the country and the cause of education. With Mr. Bright's criticisms upon the bill as it stood it was unnecessary to deal, however keenly Mr. Forster might feel them; but he could not allow the impression to get abroad that the educational policy of the Government was to undergo some great alteration in consequence of Mr. Bright's admission to the Cabinet. The following correspondence will speak for itself.

To MR. BRIGHT.

“Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,
“October 25th, 1873.

“MY DEAR BRIGHT,

“I must congratulate you on getting through the great exertion of your speech, without, I trust, any injury to your health, but I fear I must ask you to let me refer to that part of it which deals with the Education Act.

“You are reported as saying, ‘I was not in Parliament when the Education Bill passed. It was not at any time, so far as I remember, submitted to the Cabinet whilst I was in the practice of meeting with my colleagues. I put this explanation, not for the sake of saying that somebody else did it and I did not, but because it has been said, and in a very important newspaper, that I was one of those who were concerned in that measure, and had given my assent to it. I think the original fault in the whole of that bill was in submitting to Parliament a great measure on a great subject

which had not been sufficiently discussed in public. The Education Bill was supposed to be needful because the system that up to 1870 had existed was held to be insufficient and bad; and the fault of the bill in my mind is that it has extended and completed the system which it ought, in point of fact, to have superseded. It was a bill—I speak of it as it passed, and combined with the changes brought about by the minutes of the Privy Council which came into force with it—it was a bill to encourage denominational education, and, when that was impossible, to establish board schools. It ought, in my opinion, to have been a bill to establish board schools, and to offer inducement to those who were connected with denominational schools to bring them under the control of the school board.'

"Now, the impression made on your audience by these remarks, and which accordingly drew from those of them who disliked the educational policy of the Government 'loud cheers' for your opinions about the Act, and loud cries of 'shame' for its provisions, was that you were entirely free from responsibility with regard to the measure, and therefore at full liberty to condemn its principle, and to say that no measure ought at that time to have been brought forward.

"I must repeat to you what I said when we had some talk in London about your remarks at the Westminster Palace Hotel, that I really cannot think this a fair impression, and if I recall to you the facts, I think you will agree with me.

"What happened, I believe, was this. The ministers responsible for education having been requested to frame a measure for the consideration of their colleagues, I drew up, as Vice-President, a long memorandum, to which Ripon, as Lord President, appended his approval. It is this paper to which you allude in your speech as the 'original memorandum of the bill which I was permitted to see.'

"Excuse my saying that it was sent to you, as to other members of the Cabinet, on or about November 5th, 1869, in order that the Cabinet, and you as one of its members, should decide what course should be adopted.

"This memorandum came before a Cabinet early in November, and Ripon informed me that, after a discussion of I know not what length, but in which you took part, it was decided that a bill should be prepared in accordance therewith, and brought in by myself. A bill was prepared in strict accordance with this memorandum—in fact, merely putting the memorandum into bill language. In the Queen's speech it was stated that an education bill would be brought in. I gave notice

of it on the first day of the session, and brought it in on February 17th.

"I enclose this memorandum, and mark some of the passages, which will, I think, recall to your memory that it contains a clear statement of—is, in fact, founded on—that principle to which you now object, viz. that our object should be 'to *supplement* the present voluntary system;' to enforce 'compulsory school provision, if and when necessary, but *not otherwise*; to give time, after educational destitution is proved, for bad schools to be improved, or for new schools to be erected under the existing voluntary system, before rates are levied.'

"In so far as the Act now differs from the memorandum of the original bill, it is not more, but less denominational, inasmuch as the provision is inserted which enables any district to have a school board if it wishes, whether educationally destitute or not, and that provision is omitted which would have enabled the school boards to aid the denominational schools out of the rates, not by mere payment for indigent parents, but by general subsidy.

"I am well aware that, had it not been for your attack of illness, which we all felt to be such a great calamity, you might have expressed your objections, and obliged a reconsideration of the question between the Cabinet of February 4th, the last before the Queen's speech at which you were present, and the 17th February, when I brought in the bill on behalf of the Government; but as you had allowed all the previous steps to be taken, do you yourself think you would have done so?"

"It is very painful to me to ask these questions, but I must ask one other.

"Were you in my place, having a most difficult but yet important work to do, in doing which I must incur much odium and make many sacrifices, would you not be surprised that one of the men who set me to this work should now head the opposition to its performance?"

"Of far more importance, however, than the past is the future, though the past is not without an important bearing on the present.

"It is true, you state in your speech that you do not pledge the Government, but such a speech spoken by any Cabinet minister, and especially by you, with your power and influence in the country, throws so much doubt upon the future educational policy of the Government, and thereby so much increases my difficulties, that I am obliged to press upon Mr. Gladstone the necessity, in my opinion, of this doubt being without delay removed.

"You will, however, I suppose, yourself think it necessary to bring the matter before the next Cabinet.

"Believe me to remain, my dear Bright,

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER."

MR. BRIGHT to MR. FORSTER.

"Rochdale, October 27th, 1873.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"I thank you for your letter of Saturday, and hasten to reply to it. My recollection of what took place in regard to the education question just before I was withdrawn from the Cabinet is this.

"The only document which I can *recollect* to have received and read is the draft bill of the date of January 22nd, 1870, of which I think it is but fair to say that my impression at the time was rather favourable than otherwise. I was at that period—I mean in the fortnight preceding the complete breakdown of my health—not able to give attention to it, being harassed with the Irish Land Bill, and especially with the clauses I had proposed to facilitate the purchase of farms by the tenantry, and by the feebleness which I felt to be increasing upon me.

"What I recollect of the Cabinet discussion is only this, that it was a question whether the Education Bill should be announced or not. I was not in favour of proceeding with it, the Irish Land Bill being in hand; but Lord De Grey took a different view, and referred to your strong wish to proceed.

"I do not think any definite result was arrived at on that occasion, but later a result in accordance with your view was come to, as was assumed, and the intended measure was announced. I think it likely that I gave less attention to the whole question than it deserved, but I was burdened with much work and much weakness.

"But if the bill had passed as it appeared in the original draft, or rather, if no change had been made in the annual grant, and none in the mode of election, I should not have condemned it. I know something of the difficulties of the question, and I can make allowances for any one having to deal with it, and I think the Nonconformists would also have regarded the measure with forbearance, and probably with approval.

"The increase of the annual grant not only made the Church party the more cling to their schools, but induced them

to make efforts far greater than before to give notice of new schools, that they might secure, first the building grant, and then the increased annual grant, with which they can maintain many of their schools without any voluntary contributions, and the rest of them with small and unimportant voluntary aid.

“This great concession, unexpected and, as I think, wholly evil, has had the effect of fastening on the country the old system, and it has thrown into school board elections an element most unfavourable to an honest and successful working of an educational measure.

“The old question of supremacy is raised, and the money payments of the State are struggled for by priest and parson and their partisans, to the exclusion of the real interests of public education.

“Then we have the cumulative vote with its aggravation of another evil. The school board is comprised of delegates of church and chapels; and the miserable squabbles of these delegates, suspecting and thwarting each other, fill up many of the reports of the school board discussions.

“But I need not go further into this. My opinion on the scheme as a whole has been long known, and before my constituents I felt bound to explain it. There are two points to which I have referred—the one bearing on the question whether we are on the right tack or not, must be left for experience and the partial failure which I cannot but anticipate. The other has immediate reference to the state of feeling among the Nonconformists, caused in some degree by the operation of the 25th clause, and, I think, justly. They complain, too, that in many cases the annual grant is so large that schools are maintained without voluntary contributions, and that annual grants are given to new schools hereafter to be built, thus continuing and encouraging the undesirable extension of a system which must in the main be a Church system.

“What I have condemned in the policy of 1870 is the increased annual grant, which has entirely changed the spirit and nature of the bill, and the mode of election, which gives to sects a power which was intended to be given to the public.

“With regard to the main question, the Government can do nothing now, but I think they can, and ought, to propose some change in the minor points, which will show some consideration for the feelings of Nonconformists. If they refuse to do this, I see no hope of a remedy to the disorganization which their educational policy has introduced into the Liberal party in every constituency in England and Wales.

"I hope I need not tell you how much I am grieved to differ from you in this matter. If it could have slept, I should not have disturbed it. But it is the cause of incessant and, I fear, increasing discord in the constituencies, and I cannot allow my position in regard to it to be misunderstood by those with whom I have acted all my political life. I wish to be faithful to new friends, but not at the expense of old ones, or of my own convictions.

"I think, after reading your letter, I must be in some degree mistaken as to what took place in 1869; but what I have said at Birmingham and now was, and is, precisely what I remember. But as to the changes and concessions made during the session, which alone I seriously condemn, I knew nothing of them for many months after they were settled, and of course cannot accept any responsibility in connection with them.

"If you think well of it, you may send this letter to Mr. Gladstone. I should rather like him to see it.

"Believe me, always,

"Very sincerely yours,

"JOHN BRIGHT."

"Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P.,

"Burley-in-Wharfedale, near Leeds."

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,

"October 25th, 1873.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"You will not be surprised at my finding educational difficulties much increased by Bright's speech. I think I ought to send you a copy of a letter which I felt I could not help writing, more especially about the past; but as regards the immediate future, the position is this:

"We are just now in the very crisis of the working of the Act, having to force school boards on the recalcitrant districts.

"This would be a hard enough task under any circumstances, but with the League trusting, and the voluntaries fearing, by reason of this speech, that the educational policy of the Government will be changed, the department will be almost powerless, and my position will be hardly tenable.

"I merely mention this as one of the difficulties in which this speech is considered by both sides to have plunged the question.

"I suppose Bright will bring the matter before the next

Cabinet, but if not, I think I must ask you to do so, or to let me bring it forward, as, if the policy of the Government is not changed, I hardly can avoid taking an early opportunity of saying so.

“Just consider what would be Cardwell’s difficulties in working his purchase scheme if a powerful colleague declared its policy utterly wrong, and said he only watched for an opportunity of changing it.

“I am, dear Mr. Gladstone,

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

To MR. BRIGHT.

“Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,

“October 28th, 1873.

“MY DEAR BRIGHT,

“I am obliged to you for your letter of yesterday, and observe what you say with regard to some change in the minor points of the Act, and I hardly need say that I shall consider any proposal you may make for that purpose with the utmost desire to agree with you if I rightly can.

“Meantime, just one word with regard to the difference between the first draft of the bill and Act as it passed. I think you will find the changes are against, not for, the denominational system.

“1. The year of grace (for denominational schools) was struck out.

“2. Building grants were stopped after the end of the year.

“3. The power to assist the voluntary schools out of the rates, greatly objected to by the Nonconformists, was omitted.

“4. The conscience clause was made much stronger by being turned into a time-table conscience clause.

“5. Catechisms were struck out of board schools.

“Against this was the fact that by the code the annual grant was increased, but this was not so great a money gain as the omission of 3 (viz. the power of a denominational board to take rate money for denominational schools) was a money loss; and it must be remembered, (1) That other alterations in the appropriation of the grants, viz. the stoppage of the building grants after a few months, told against the voluntary schools; and (2) that the annual grant to their rivals the board schools was at the same time and to the same extent increased.

“These changes, taken as a whole, were made by Mr. Gladstone as concessions to the Nonconformist opposition, and

I am confident that the first draft of the bill more completely carried out the principle to which you object in your speech—was, in fact, more in favour of the denominational system—than the Act as it passed, and would have been so considered by the Dissenters, and I think the discussions in the House during the passing of the bill confirm this view.

“There remains the cumulative vote. That was not the proposal of the Government, but the almost unanimous desire of the House, supported by many men who in other matters support the League; and whatever the objections to it, we must not forget that in very many important boards without it League views would almost certainly be unrepresented.

“I send your letter by to-day’s post to Mr. Gladstone, and can only add how glad I should be if we could see together in this matter.

“Yours ever truly,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

To his Wife.

“80, Eccleston Square,
“November 10th, 1873.

“I write a few lines before starting for the office, as when I get there I shall be much pressed. . . . I have only time to say that my conversation with Gladstone has not been unsatisfactory. He thinks Bright means no proposal at present; nothing in the Queen’s speech—nothing till the session was well on and he could see his way. I said his friends expected more, but that was Bright’s look-out. He agreed with me. I said I did not wish to bring anything before the Cabinet, as I wished no change. All I wished, as regards Bright’s proposals, was that, if they were to be made, they should be made at once; but I added that Bright had made matters so difficult that I must, if I had to speak—and I thought I ought to speak—answer Bright, without of course naming him, but by defending the Act and the policy of the Government; and if I remained in the Cabinet after this, it was a proof that Bright would not change our policy. I said I ought to warn him (G.) of this. He told me I ought to tell Bright I should do this, and we agreed that I should not bring the matter before the Cabinet to-day, but that G. should tell him I would call on him. I write all this in great hurry and distraction. Farewell.”

It was at Liverpool that Forster made the speech in which

he vindicated his Act, and made it clear that there was no intention of abandoning the line of policy upon which it was based. In all that he had to say of Mr. Bright in this speech he was most friendly, as he had been in his private communications with him on the subject. At the first Cabinet at which they met, after he had thus replied to Mr. Bright, the latter handed him a note containing these words: "I think your speech very good and fair, and likely to do good, though there are some points in it, as you well know, that I wish you could view somewhat more as I view them.—J. B."

There are those who expressed surprise, and even regret, that Mr. Forster did not take a more antagonistic position, in reference to this action by Mr. Bright. In reply to some strictures of this nature, Forster wrote, saying that he could not think of Mr. Bright otherwise than as an old and honoured friend. "I have been long on terms of friendship with him, both private and political, and the fact that I do not consider that in his speech he behaved well to me does not make that friendship cease. I was proud of his friendship in past years, and with all his faults and infirmities there are few men I honour more. Even in this matter I cannot forget that his conduct arises very much out of the difficulties resulting from his own self-sacrifice in joining Gladstone. Then I was addressing (at Liverpool) an audience much more against Bright than for him. I knew the Tories were trying to make it appear as though we had quarrelled; the papers had said we did not speak, and I felt it due to the Government and the party, and especially to Gladstone, to disprove this, and all the more due as I was really obtaining the absolute victory in the dispute."

The controversy with Mr. Bright was the culmination of Forster's difficulties and anxieties whilst he was education minister. The reader now has some slight knowledge of the obstacles he had to encounter, and the grave and painful circumstances in which he constantly found himself placed, whilst he was striving to the best of his ability to secure fair play for the Act of 1870. Unpopularity with the Radicals, with whom he had been so long in friendly concert, and a place of anxiety, it might even be said of suspicion, among his own colleagues in the Cabinet, were his immediate rewards for the part he had played in founding our national system of education. But the end of his oppressive official labours and worries at the Council Office was now very near. It came with the dissolution of February, 1874, and the resignation of Mr. Gladstone. Writing to his sister-in-law, Miss Arnold, in

acknowledgment of a letter on the occasion of his quitting his work in the Education Department, he said, "You and all my friends, I fear, overvalue it—at any rate, overvalue me in it; but still I do believe some education is now secured to all English children. Whether that *some* is to be enough to be of real value is now the question; but I do not think the work can stop, and I believe Lord Sandon will do his best to carry it on."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GENEVA ARBITRATION.

IN order to compress as far as possible into one section of this work the story of Forster's labours in connection with the Education Act, I have to some extent anticipated the chronological course of events. It is now necessary to deal with some other matters of importance that arose whilst he was a member of the Government of 1868-74. And first a word must be said as to the other labours which he had to face in his office besides those relating to education.

The Vice-President of the Council has as many duties to discharge as a maid-of-all-work. Questions so remote from ordinary educational topics as vivisection, the contagious diseases of animals, and a hundred other subjects of the most miscellaneous character, have to be dealt with in that which is primarily the Education Office. It was very soon after he entered upon his new post that Forster began to understand how heavy was the task laid upon him.

To his Wife.

“Strawberry Hill,

“Sunday evening, January 10th, 1869.

“It is now just twelve, my dearest, but I must write thee a line before I go to bed. This place is amusing. . . . The night before last, Lord Russell was here, very old and very deaf, with a velvet cap on his head and a hat in his hand; but in cheery spirits, the plucky old fellow that he is. Last night, we had the Duc de Chartres and the Duc d'Aumale; the latter has stayed over to-day, and is very conversable, but he looks aged. I have just been having a long talk with him on the Guises and the Valois Kings. Osborne also is here. He is at his best; full of broad but good-humoured fun, and at dinner yesterday it was a play to see the contest between him and Hayward.

"My day has answered, as I have got the talk with Bruce I wanted; but really to master this office will need an amount of work which is fearful. Brand writes me word I must bring in a Cattle Plague Bill. Of course I can let matters go, filling up gaps as they yawn; but to fill my place, that is, to do my duty, I must find out in a day or two, with my time fully occupied by other matters, what ought to be done, better than those persons who have attended to the matter or been practically interested for years. . . . Well, my dearest, I long for thee to be with me, and the dear children also. You will help me through the next few years—they can only be few. If all this had come earlier, when there would have been more of them, I might have done more good. But now to bed."

The most important piece of legislation which he carried out, in addition to the Education Act, was the Ballot Act. This Act may be said to have been born in the Education Office, for the original idea of the ballot, as it is now in use in our parliamentary and municipal elections, is to be found in the bye-laws framed in 1870 for the election of the London School Board. When the first election under the Education Act took place in London, Mr. Forster, accompanied by Lord Hartington and Mr. Cumin, went to the Westminster polling station, and watched the voting with eager interest. He was not merely seeking to satisfy himself as to the way in which the Education Act was likely to be supported in London. He was learning a lesson in connection with the ballot, for it had already been decided that a Ballot Bill should shortly be introduced into Parliament. The novelty of secret voting was at that time so great that even men of exceptional intelligence could hardly comprehend the new method of recording their opinions. At this school board election of 1870, for example, one of Forster's most distinguished colleagues in the Cabinet, having duly filled up his voting paper, turned to the officer in charge of the ballot, and asked him, with pathetic interest, on what part of the paper he was to sign his name.

It was with ignorance of this kind—ignorance begotten of the Englishman's natural predilection for the time-honoured system of open voting—that Forster had to deal when he brought in his Ballot Bill. The fight was a prolonged one. As has already been seen, the bill was thrown out by the Lords when it was first brought forward in 1871. On that occasion Mr. Forster got into some little trouble with the Upper House, arising from some cavalier remark which he made during the debate in committee as to the way in which

the peers would probably deal with the measure. This remark was eagerly fastened upon by Mr. Disraeli, and it seemed not unlikely that some charge would be brought against him in the House of Lords. The affair blew over, however; and the peers satisfied themselves with rejecting the bill. Its passage through the House of Commons, owing to the novelty of the machinery provided for the purpose of preserving secrecy, had been prolonged and difficult, twenty-seven nights being occupied in the debates, actually more than the time taken to pass the Education Act. A couple of evenings sufficed to seal its fate in the House of Lords. Reintroduced at the very beginning of the session of 1872, it again encountered considerable opposition, and there seems at one time to have been considerable risk of its loss, owing to the perfunctory manner in which some of Forster's colleagues, who had no real love for the measure, discharged their duty in regard to it. However, after twenty-three nights of debate, it was at last sent to the House of Lords, and on July 18th it received the royal assent. So completely does the Education Bill eclipse all the other Parliamentary achievements of Mr. Forster, that it hardly seems worth while to mention the Ballot Act in connection with his legislative work. Those who watched him whilst he was passing this latter measure through the House of Commons, however, came to the conclusion that the management of the business spoke even more highly for Forster's capacity as a Parliamentary tactician than did his success with the Education Act.

Of the numerous measures connected with the outbreak of cattle plague with which he had to deal whilst at the Council Office it is unnecessary to speak, except to point out the extent to which this department of the office encroached upon his time and absorbed his strength. Whatever he had to do in connection with it was done with the same thoroughness and energy as he had displayed in his educational work. The public health is, to a certain extent, under the Vice-President of the Council, and a Vaccination Laws Amendment Bill was among the measures which he brought forward and piloted through Parliament. It had been introduced at the time of one of the periodical outbreaks of small-pox in the metropolis, and when there was a loud outcry in favour of re-vaccination. Forster resolved that he would undergo re-vaccination, and he took advantage of the occasion to make a practical experiment as to the character of the vaccination by public officers. Without telling any one of his intention, he presented himself at the rooms of one of these officials during the hours prescribed

for the attendance of the public, patiently waited his turn, and was duly operated upon by a medical man who was wholly ignorant of his identity. From that time he was able to speak more authoritatively than most members of Parliament could pretend to do upon the question of public vaccination and the manner in which the poor were served by the officers appointed by the law.

There was another question associated with his official duties which interested him greatly. This was the part of his functions which related to the treatment of animals. In connection with the measures he had to introduce for preventing the spread of contagious diseases among cattle, he was able, to his intense delight, to do something to mitigate the sufferings which sheep and oxen have to undergo in their passage from the fields to the markets; whilst, in connection with the practice of vivisection, on which he felt very strongly, he had the opportunity of taking some steps to protect dumb creatures from anything like reckless action on the part of men of science.

Extract from his Diary.

“*March 21st, 1872.*—I finally settled with Simon the rabbit case. I was intending a minute to Lord Ripon, saying that I disapprove of any experiments on living animals; but, finding that not only was there no vivisection *à la* Majendie, but that the experiments were at the Brown Institution, I withdrew my minute, getting an assurance from Simon that there should be no such vivisection without warning me, and that when pain was given by inoculation chloroform should be given. He said the experiments were of the utmost importance, assisting towards remedies for consumption. I do not like it, but have done the best I can.”

Writing to Sir Arthur Helps (January 12th, 1873) he expresses very strongly his horror of anything like reckless cruelty to animals in the name of science, and adds, “My mind is made up on these three points: (1) Vivisection may in some most rare cases be useful for the prolongation of life and removal of suffering of man and beast; (2) it is therefore allowable when very rarely practised by real discoverers. (3) But it is not allowable even for them except with every possible alleviation of pain, and ought to be absolutely forbidden by learners and general practitioners.” The well-known line which teaches us that “the mark of rank in

nature is capacity for pain" was rejected by Forster. He believed that the sufferings of a rabbit under vivisection were not less than his own would be under the same process, and he could not bear the thought that such pain should be inflicted save where something like an absolute necessity was proved.

The years 1869 to 1872 were made very anxious years to English statesmen, owing to the condition of the relations of this country with the United States. The strong feeling of resentment which had been engendered on the other side of the Atlantic, not, perhaps, so much by the depredations of the *Alabama* as by the tone of undisguised hostility to the North which had been adopted during the war by nearly every politician of eminence in this country save Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Forster, was bearing its natural fruit. We now had on our hands one of those "unfinished questions" which "have no pity for the repose of nations." The successful North did not forget the time when it had looked in vain, in the crisis of its fate, to the English Cabinet for some expression of sympathy and goodwill. Its people did not press for the immediate settlement of the claims they had put forth on account of the depredations of the *Alabama* and the other privateers built by Englishmen. But they made known those claims to the whole world, and they further made it known that, until they had been settled, no real goodwill could exist between the two branches of the English race. When or how they would press for a settlement they refused to say. It was enough for them that the open question remained an open and ever-growing sore.

It was impossible for English statesmen to remain easy in mind whilst this was the state of feeling in America. Every Englishman would have deprecated a war between the two countries as an outrage upon civilization. But, even though no thought of war might exist in connection with the question, it was clear that for the sake of both peoples some effort ought to be made to put an end to the sense of grievance on the part of the Americans. It was manifestly incumbent upon England to take the first step in such a matter, for it was the action of England which had injured America. It was a fortunate thing for both countries that the Gladstone Ministry of 1868 contained two such tried friends of the United States as Mr. Bright and Mr. Forster. In what esteem the latter was held by leading Americans the following letter from Mr. Adams, the American Minister to this country, will show:—

To MR. FORSTER.

“ 54, Portland Place, March 14th, 1868

“ MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,

“ I brought with me from the United States several copies of a work to which I devoted the greater part of eight of the best years of my life.* They have been for the most part placed in the public libraries of the kingdom. I find one copy which I had reserved for the person whom I most esteem, as well for his staunch and unvarying support of a policy of goodwill to America as for his personal qualities, as I have observed them in private intercourse. Will you do me the great favour to accept of it ?

“ Very truly yours,

“ CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.”

In 1869 the Government were able to negotiate a treaty with Mr. Reverdy Johnson, the genial Minister of the United States, who had come over to this country full of a desire to re-establish friendly relations with us. By this treaty the questions in dispute were to be submitted to four commissioners, two English and two American, and to an arbitrator, chosen by the commissioners. The treaty was hailed with great satisfaction in England; but when it was submitted to the American Senate for ratification, it was violently attacked, more especially by Mr. Sumner. The Senate rejected the proposal, and the President recalled Mr. Reverdy Johnson, replacing him by Mr. J. L. Motley, the well-known historian.

Mr. Sumner's speech aroused strong feeling both in America and in England, and for a time it seemed that the hopes of a pacific settlement of the question in dispute were at an end. Forster was the first man of importance on this side of the Atlantic to make some reply to Mr. Sumner. Addressing his constituents at Bradford (May 20th, 1869), he deplored the fact that so distinguished an American as Mr. Sumner should, after Englishmen had swallowed their pride and agreed to submit their differences with the United States to arbitration, have deliberately sought to prevent this arbitration, and to insist upon something like an unconditional surrender and apology on our part. It happened that Forster could speak of Mr. Sumner as a personal friend. The great American had been his guest at Wharfeside in 1857, and they had corresponded at intervals since then. But the high tribute which he paid to Mr. Sumner's personal virtues did not soften the

* The book was a collected edition of the works of Mr. Adams's father.

strength of the case which he made out in reply to that gentleman's bitter and unreasonable attack upon England. The speech dealt fully with the points made by Sumner, and, above all, with his contention that the proclamation of neutrality was a hostile act on our part. This proclamation had been made, Forster showed, in accordance with the earnest wishes of himself and of other friends of the North.

His powerful argument made a great impression in England, where it was generally accepted as the authoritative reply to Mr. Sumner's somewhat splenetic outburst of wounded patriotism. In America, too, it was received, by all those who were more anxious to see concord restored than to keep alive a painful feeling of resentment, with unbounded satisfaction, and many correspondents from the other side of the Atlantic made haste to assure Mr. Forster that he had expressed their views as well as his own in his answer to Mr. Sumner. Of the letters of that period, only those of Mr. Adams and Mr. Sumner himself need be quoted here.

From MR. ADAMS.

“Quincy, Massachusetts,
“June 4th, 1869.

“MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,

“It is now more than a year since I left my post in London, and I have scarcely written a single letter to any of the friends I left there. This must be ascribed, not to my forgetfulness of them, but to the absorbing nature of the private occupation which has monopolized my attention all this time. Ten years of absence, and the changes made by the war have imposed upon me a necessity of corresponding exertion, which is yet pressing upon me, and which will, I fear, continue to do so for several years to come. So far as my private interests are concerned, I did not return a moment too soon.

“I very much fear that I cannot say the same of the public interests. Without claiming any extravagant share upon the influence of events, I think I may say that had I remained until March, the embarrassments occasioned by the mistakes of my successor would not have been interposed. Without personal knowledge of him, I had yet cherished an idea, gathered from his prudent public action during the war, that he would be, at any rate, a safe and cautious representative. I very much fear that the course public opinion has taken in this country must be attributed, in a great measure, to his

errors and to his misconception of his own actual position as an exponent of our national feelings. He was led to this mistake by the accidental circumstance of his unanimous confirmation by the Senate, to which he attached a significance that did not belong to it. Had I remained, the only difference would have been that nothing at all would have been done until the new administration had come in. Thus all the events which now embarrass it would have been saved. On this account I take some blame to myself for my retreat, though upon every other I am sure that I was justified. And even upon this, how could any one foresee what happened?

"I have been led to this train of thought by reading a report of your speech at Bradford, which is so moderate and sensible that I shall try to get it inserted in some of the papers here. Not that I think anything can undo the mischief that has been done. Far from it. The great objection to Mr. Sumner's speech, in my mind, is not anything intrinsic, but the circumstance that it embittered the vague sense of injury entertained by nine-tenths of our people, and stimulated the demand for 'reparation,' as it is called, far beyond even the extreme point at which he seemed to place it. The consequence is, that anything likely to be conceded will fall so far below the expectation that it will only increase the dissatisfaction. Apart from this, there is some danger in the tendency of the extreme men of the stronger party to resort to the subject as a means of maintaining their waning influence. I am not in the confidence of the Administration, and therefore cannot express any opinion of their policy, that has foundation in authority. But I believe there is no purpose of making difficulty. The only danger in that quarter lies in the idea of delay, for the sake of seizing the first opportunity that may occur for what is called 'retaliation.' This is not a very elevated policy, and it may be laid aside, after longer experience in public affairs, in favour of a better; and I hope it will.

"Our friend Motley is, I think, very well disposed. I had some conversation with him just before he left, which convinced me that the desire to succeed in his mission will ensure a disposition to avoid offence and to be patient. I trust that on your side you will entertain the same, so that the two countries may avoid a collision, which could by no possibility benefit either, and would injure both.

"Mrs. Adams desires me to express her kindest regards to Mrs. Forster, in which I fully join.

"Very truly yours,
"C. F. ADAMS."

From MR. SUMNER.

[Private.]

“Washington, June 8th, 1869.

“DEAR MR. FORSTER,

“I had already read your speech before I received the copy which you kindly sent me. *Si sic omnia!* If other English utterances were in the same tone, the differences between the two countries would be much nearer a settlement than I fear they are.

“The last few weeks have witnessed a consentaneous effort in England to widen the breach, (1) by suppressing the statement of our grievances, (2) by daily misrepresentations of that statement, and (3) by abuse and vilification. Of course all this postpones the day of settlement, for there can be no settlement until a plain statement of our case is read and understood in England. This is now refused. I am sorry, because I desire a settlement, wherein I differ from many who would keep the question open.

“Your speech is printed in our newspapers, and the articles denouncing America, the Senate, and myself. This is right. Many ask why the same fairness does not show itself in England. Not a press in England which has not attributed to me sentiments and allegations which could not have been attributed had the speech been candidly laid before their readers.

“Even you, in your speech, complain of me for addressing these ‘fashionable men, who, after all, did not guide the destinies of England.’ Oh no! There is nothing of this in my speech. *I spoke only of the Government and its tastes*, which found an echo in Parliamentary cheers. It would have been entirely unworthy of the occasion, as it seems to me, had I stepped aside to accuse the ‘fashionable,’ or to praise the ‘working men.’ To the latter I have offered my homage at other times.

“Pardon me if I call attention to another statement. You say, ‘if there be danger at all, it is from America.’ How so? Not a word of it in the speech which English newspapers misrepresented without printing. At the time of its delivery the speech was hailed as ‘*pacifc*,’ and I challenge any person to read it through and find a single note of war.

“The secretary of our Peace Society writes that he proposes to print it as a ‘*peace tract*.’ Certainly, in this spirit I tried to speak.

“I have always had a deep sense of our wrongs from England—to my mind the most terrible ever offered by one friendly Power to another. These I expressed fully in my

speech of September 10th, 1863, on which Lord Russell commented at Blairgowrie. Such was my love of peace—especially with England—that when our troubles were over I said nothing, hoping for a settlement. Never in the Senate or elsewhere did I utter a word. At last the late treaty was negotiated. As I think of it now, there was madness in that negotiation. It was made (1) after a new President had been elected, known to feel intensely on the *Alabama* question; and (2) after the country had been aroused by Mr. R. Johnson's maudlin career to a frame of mind which demanded its full dues. It was no sooner signed than the people condemned it, before the committee or Senate had acted. Had it been signed earlier by six months I think it might have been adopted. When it was determined to reject the treaty it became my duty to assign the reasons.

"I hope you will talk freely with Motley, who was in Washington at the time, and who will tell you to what extent my speech represented the views of all here, from the President down to the doorkeeper, and he will tell you also my own desires and hopes.

"Of course, it will be for England to open the negotiations again. If those who control her affairs prefer that the question should remain unsettled, there are many here, besides the numerous Irish, who will be pleased; but I am not in this number.

"I should be glad to know if England now shares the opinions of the law lords; to the effect that, by the concession of belligerency, the builders of war vessels were relieved from the crime of piracy. If this be the law, as I cannot doubt, then did that false concession open the dockyards and arsenals of England to a pro-slavery rebellion? So it seems. I cannot see it otherwise, and therefore I regard the concession as the first stage of the great offence.

"I hope you will see General Schenck, who is the leader of our House of Representatives. He will talk frankly and wisely. Pardon my frankness, and believe me, dear Forster,

"Sincerely yours,

"CHARLES SUMNER."

To MR. SUMNER.

"80, Eccleston Square, London,

"June 20th, 1869.

"DEAR MR. SUMNER,

"I hasten to thank you for your letter of the 8th inst., just received.

“It is very pleasant to me to find that you do not dislike the tone of the speech I sent you, though you do not, of course, agree with its argument.

“I hardly think we shall gain by dwelling on our disagreements as to past facts.

“What we do agree in is in an earnest desire that both our countries should do that which is right one to the other, and in a determination to do that which in us lies towards this result.

“It was a real pain to me to feel it my duty to publicly reply to your speech, but I must repeat how glad I am to find that nothing which I said has given you personal annoyance.

“Yours very sincerely,

“W. E. FORSTER.

“I shall be most glad to make General Schenck’s acquaintance.”

From MR. SUMNER.

“Boston, June 28th, 1869.

“DEAR MR. FORSTER,

“I enclose to you a copy of Mr. R. Johnson’s despatch on his negotiation which has never yet seen the light.

“It was received on the morning of the 4th of March, and the last public act of Seward and of A—— J—— was to send it confidentially to the Senate.

“You will see that on belligerency he takes the very ground now occupied by the administration of the present Government and by myself. This is the American ground. To my mind, this question is one of the most important in the Law of Nations ever presented for practical consideration, and absolutely without any authoritative precedent.

“My hope is that, however definitely decided, it will be so as most to advance civilization and the repose of nations.

“Faithfully yours,

“CHARLES SUMNER.”

To MR. SUMNER.

“July 17th, 1869.

“DEAR MR. SUMNER,

“Many thanks for your note of the 28th ult., and for the copy of Mr. R. Johnson’s despatch, which I am glad to have the opportunity of seeing, but which, of course, I con-

sider strictly confidential. As regards the Proclamation of Neutrality, I confess I am still strongly of opinion that such proclamation was in accordance with international law and a mere acknowledgment of existing facts, but it may well be that in my interpretation of international law I may be mistaken. I think, however, I hardly can be mistaken in my conviction that this proclamation was not made with unfriendly *animus* to your Government, because that is a matter of which I can speak from personal recollection and knowledge.

“ You allude to the recognition of independence as analogous to a recognition of belligerent rights, but at the time of the proclamation I myself, and all the well-wishers of the North, drew a marked line between the [two kinds] of recognition. We acknowledged belligerent rights because there were belligerent facts, but we struggled hard and successfully against the emissaries of the South and Louis Napoleon in our determination not to recognize independence, because that was not a fact, because we trusted it never would be a fact, and were determined to do nothing which would in the slightest degree help to make it a fact.

“ However, you and I agree in so many things, that I suppose we must agree to differ in this matter.

“ Yours very truly,
“ W. E. FORSTER.”

For more than twelve months the dispute was allowed to linger on, without any vigorous attempt being made to close it. In 1871, however, a fresh effort was made to heal the sore. Lord Ripon and Sir Stafford Northcote were despatched to Washington for the purpose of concluding a fresh treaty for the submission of the questions at issue to arbitration. They remained in America from February until May, and they had the satisfaction before they left of concluding a solemn treaty with the Government of the United States, under which the American claims to compensation for our action during the civil war were to be submitted to a High Court of International Arbitrators, who were to meet at Geneva to hear the cases of both countries in the spring of 1872. This treaty was duly ratified by the Senate, in spite of another fierce outburst of indignation on the part of Mr. Sumner, whose feeling regarding the conduct of England did not appear to have been softened either by time or by the manifest desire of Englishmen to put an end to the long-standing dispute.

But when everything thus seemed to be settled, and there was at last good hope of the final removal of the long-standing

obstacle to the friendship of the two peoples, a new difficulty made its appearance in a very unexpected quarter. This was the claim for indirect damages which was set forth in the "Case" of America as it was presented to the Court of Arbitration at Geneva. Great was the indignation in England when, at the close of January, 1872, it first became known that the American Government was prepared to prefer this demand. The Cabinet was at once summoned to consider the question, and some of the members were for forthwith withdrawing from the arbitration. Mr. Forster was strongly in favour of a more moderate and prudent course, but at the same time he felt strongly as to the unfairness of the demand made by America. "Clearly," he writes in his diary (*January 30th, 1872*), "this claim is sharp practice by the Americans, as the protocols prove that they had waived the indirect claims. Our press is very indignant and exigent, the *Daily News* leading. A cool head and a cool temper wanted. I asked Tenterden to dinner to talk the matter over with him. He is strong against diplomatic negotiation, and recommends a protest and refusal to submit the indirect claims to the arbitration, to be delivered through our agent to the tribunal to the United States agent, both being appointed by Article 2 of the Treaty. Thereby diplomatic wrangling would be avoided, and the Yankees would not be forced to immediate reply while the Presidential caucus is at its height. I never felt any matter so serious. (*January 31st*) Drew up a memorandum urging communication through the agents, rather than by despatch, on the Alabama hitch. Took it to Granville; then sent it to Gladstone, asking him whether he would object to its circulation. . . . Found a note from G— assenting to circulation, so sent F— off with the box. (*February 2nd*) My box returned. All the ministers minutes against me, except Gladstone, Granville, Ripon, and Chancellor."

The question was discussed in the Cabinet, but the opinion was not favourable to Mr. Forster's proposal, who had to give way. He did what he could, however, to make the passage in the Queen's speech on the subject as friendly and open as possible. "Ripon was miserable, and no wonder," he notes in his diary. "He will be blamed for the possibility of this sharp practice, but in fact the Cabinet are responsible, as we discussed every word. . . . Sheriff's dinner at Ripon's. Sat between Cardwell and Gladstone. Interesting talk with him. He gave me his calculation for estimating the war prolongation claim at 1600 millions sterling. (*February 4th*) In the

evening a circulation box with a telegram from Thornton that it was Fish's private opinion that the discretionary arbitration was at an end, and that the Americans would withdraw their arbitrator and counsel. Matters look as serious as I expected. (*February 5th*) Called on Granville to talk over American matters with him. While there, Gladstone came. I said our case as regarded the interpretation of the Treaty was much the best, but the Americans might persuade themselves they had a case. Ours was a circumstantial argument, and 'needed as good a speaker as you (Gladstone) to make it clear.' At which he was indignant. He was glad to find me, wanting to ask me whether I would assent to changing 'understood' to 'held' in the speech. If so, as he thought the rest of the Cabinet would, he would telegraph to Ripon, who was gone to Osborne, to tell the Queen of the alteration, supposing he himself consented. . . . I did not assent. Met Ripon at his house on his return from Osborne. He said I did right about the clause. (*February 9th*) Called upon Adams at Maurigny's Hotel a little after ten. Leaving to-day for the States, and glad to see me. After civil talk about his wife's health, which called him back, etc., he expressed his surprise at our feelings. I explained it as very natural. We never intended this arbitration, etc., etc. Well, if we took this ground the arbitration was at an end, and America would never make another treaty with us. I think he said if we insisted on the indirect claims being excluded they must withdraw. This was not encouraging; but just then Evarts came in, and I rehearsed the conversation, which went on for some time, but ended in Evarts's asking why, having made in our despatch and the Queen's speech our declaration that we did not consider the indirect claims within the reference, we should not go on with the arbitration. 'How can we,' said I, 'when we are determined not to pay any award on them?' 'But you might let this be clearly understood.' This was what I wanted from him, as it was very much what Ripon and I wished. So I said, 'I do not understand Mr. Adams to have said this.' Upon which Adams immediately and most fully assented, and Evarts and the latter kept on asking his question, to which I gave no answer, which would, I suppose, show them I did not dissent. I took care to say I subscribed every word of the despatch and speech, but I thought Gladstone had in his speech gone too far. We parted very friendly, though with a mutual sense of the seriousness of the crisis."

A few days later General Schenck unofficially proposed four possible plans by way of settling the difficulty. (1) A

lump sum paid by England; (2) a maximum sum paid to cover all claims, direct or indirect, supposing the arbitrators found against us; (3) Proceeding with the arbitration under our protest that we did not consider the indirect claims within the treaty, and could not abide by any decision against us as respected them, or pay in respect of them any gross sum or portion thereof; (4) An exchange of Vancouver's Island for the indirect claims, upon the principle that both treaties were open to two interpretations.

The wrangle between the two Governments went on from day to day, amid the most profound anxiety on the part of the friends of peace in both countries. The public on this side of the Atlantic felt strongly regarding what was considered as the sharp practice of Mr. Bancroft Davis, the American counsel, and unpleasant recriminations began to pass from side to side. As Forster had said when the difficulty first arose, a cool head and a cool temper were both needed by any one who should attempt to keep the treaty alive. His own anxiety on the subject was excessive, and he lost no opportunity of strengthening the pacific section in the Cabinet, whilst he used all his private influence with Mr. Adams General Schenck, and other leading Americans in England to induce them to back the efforts of those who were seeking to carry the arbitration through. It is no secret now that the Cabinet was the scene of more than one heated discussion during these anxious weeks, and that the tension was so severe at times as almost to threaten the existence of the Ministry. Indeed, whilst the dispute was still at its height, Forster and Lord Ripon came to the determination to resign if ministers accepted a resolution of which Lord Russell had given notice, pledging us to withdraw from the reference if the indirect claims were not abandoned before the Court of Arbitration met at Geneva.

His diary casts valuable side-lights upon the state of feeling in London, and especially in the inner political circles, during this momentous time.

April 24th.—Afternoon party at Buckingham Palace. Told Schenck at the palace that he must find a peg for Ripon and me within the next few days, or we could not keep the treaty alive. Granville told me that Schenck had told him that he had telegraphed to Fish, as part of his conversation with him, that he, Granville, had said that if the claims were not withdrawn we could not go on. He said he had not said that, but he thought it might stop. I said I did not mind his pressing and frightening the Americans, but that we must not

be committed to this. He assented, saying that he would set it right in a letter."

A proposal came from the United States Government that a supplemental treaty should be signed, under which America should drop the indirect claims in consideration of a mutual agreement that the contentions thereon should be the guide of the conduct of the two nations hereafter.

Ministers, however, were much inclined to prefer another plan, proposed by General Schenck, which was that, after an interchange of notes, Mr. Adams should undertake officially to propose the withdrawal of the claims at Geneva.

"Diary, *May 10th.*—Adams, Mrs. and Miss Adams came to breakfast. Satisfactory and very confidential conversation with him after breakfast, he telling me that Fish and the President had the Senate well in hand; that he had made his proposition about withdrawal not without understanding with Fish, who had sent to him before he left. As we were walking away, I asked him what would happen if, after all, we could not agree, and he told me very confidentially that his instructions were to go to Geneva and to ask the arbitrators for the decision whether we went or not. He admitted it was doubtful whether the arbitration would go on, but Grant had always been in favour of that course."

Eventually ministers agreed to fall in with the American suggestion of a supplemental treaty, or rather of a supplemental article to the existing treaty. Yet even then a sharp crisis had to be faced. When this supplemental article was submitted to the Senate it was altered in such a manner that the English Government felt that they could not accept it. The arbitration had been adjourned whilst negotiations were in progress, and Lord Russell's resolution, directly hostile to the American contention, had also been hung up pending the course of events. Now, however, it seemed as if the last chance of a pacific settlement had failed. In the opinion of most Englishmen the action of the Senate looked as though there was a deliberate intention on the part of the leading politicians of America to prevent the arbitration from coming to anything. In these circumstances Lord Russell resolved to proceed with his resolution. Within the Cabinet the state of tension still existed. On June 3rd, Lord Russell moved his resolution in the House of Lords against going into arbitration until the indirect claims had actually been withdrawn. On the sixth, when the adjourned debate on the resolution was resumed, and when it seemed likely that the fateful division would be taken, a dramatic incident, which was not however

to be without its parallel hereafter, occurred. Just in the nick of time a letter was received from General Schenck, stating that he had private advices from Mr. Fish as to the American secretary's interpretation of the supplemental article. This interpretation was of such a character as to satisfy English demands. When the news became known in the House of Lords, Lord Russell withdrew his resolution, and the debate came to an end without producing the results anticipated from it.

On June 15th the Court of Arbitration met at Geneva. It had been brought together in spite of difficulties which might well have been deemed insuperable. For the first time in the history of the civilized world one of the great powers of Europe had allowed her policy and conduct to be submitted to the decision of an International Court. Great indeed had been the sacrifice of old traditions and of hereditary pride which this resolution on the part of England had imposed upon her; and when that great sacrifice had been made, the difficulties in the way of those who were anxious to submit a great international dispute to a more just and beneficent arbitrament than that of the sword had only begun. This is not the place in which to weigh the merits of the diplomatic disputes between the Cabinets of Washington and London. The reader has seen something, however, of the gravity of those disputes. As a matter of fact, when the Court met at Geneva no one knew exactly what would happen. We had nothing more than a vague understanding with the American Government as to the withdrawal of the indirect claims, and the greatest uncertainty prevailed in London as to whether the arbitration would or would not proceed. The meeting of the Cabinet which was held that day was almost unique in its character, and as no State secret is now involved in its proceedings, I may quote Forster's description of it from his diary.

"June 15th.—Cabinet at 12. Arbitration meeting at Geneva to-day, and we waited for news. From 12 to 2 on Parliamentary business; then adjourned to 3, some of us lunching meantime with Granville at Foreign Office. No telegram with real news; a telegram taking nearly four hours sent off by Tenterden at half-past eleven before the meeting. Again an adjournment to 5.30. Still no telegram. We had exhausted subjects of talk, and were listlessly looking at one another.

"The Opposition would snigger if they saw us," said Granville; and, soon after, he said to me, *'I wonder whether*

West has a chess-board?' disappeared, and brought it to me wrapped up in a handkerchief; and we took three chairs on to the terrace outside the Cabinet room, one for each of us and one for the chess-board. We had three games, and, alas! he won two of them. Still no telegram, and we went off to dinner, with agreement that we should be summoned to Halifax's when it came. . . . Called at Halifax's; still no news; went on to Lady Ripon's; no news there; Schenck had an early telegram with nothing in. On our return we called at the Foreign Office with Glyn, but they knew nothing.

"*June 16th, Sunday.*—A cab soon after breakfast with telegram from Tenterden, saying little except that arbitration had adjourned till Monday. I thought, however, from its tone that probably Adams would try to move out the indirect claims, and, after Church and early dinner, I went off to Granville to say this and urge help to Adams. His footman told me he was gone some time ago to a Cabinet at Gladstone's. I went on, and found they had been at it for nearly two hours. Somehow or other the messenger had missed me. My expectation was fully justified—a confidential telegram from Tenterden saying that Adams was then moving. We sent a short helpful telegram, only — really opposing. I was in time somewhat to alter it. Granville drove me off in high glee, calling at the Foreign Office to see Harcourt. After all, this treaty, which has as many lives as a cat, will live."

On June 19th the arbitrators rejected altogether the indirect claims, and there was thus an end to that which might have been the cause of the most serious feuds between the two countries.

To his Wife.

"House of Commons, 6.30 p.m., Thursday.

"Hip, hip, hip, hooray! My dearest, the final settlement of the indirect claims came during questions to-day, and Gladstone announced it amid great cheers on our side and the disgust of the Tories. This is a good year now, whatever happens.

"Thine in haste,
"W. E. FORSTER."

Forster's position in the House of Commons had of course steadily increased in importance during his tenure of office as Vice-President of the Council. In 1868, when he took his seat beside Mr. Gladstone on the Treasury Bench, he was

comparatively untried as a minister, and great as were the expectations of those who knew him well, and who had watched his career in Yorkshire, there were not a few persons who believed that his reputation far surpassed his merits, and that he was, as one of them had bluntly expressed it, "a greatly overrated man." At the end of 1873 it is certain that, whatever might be the views men held with regard to his educational policy, no one would have echoed the opinion I have just quoted as to his personal abilities. The Ministry of 1868 was described at the time as a Ministry of all the talents, and it was undoubtedly remarkable for the number of men distinguished in political life who took part in it. Unquestionably, however, next to Mr. Gladstone, the man who made the greatest advances in the estimation of the House of Commons during those years was Mr. Forster.

The disadvantages under which he laboured, owing to his lack of a university training and the comparatively late time of life at which he entered Parliament, were successfully overcome by his energy and his enthusiasm. Out of doors his name had become a shibboleth, and party rancour was freely discharged upon his head; but even those who assailed him most virulently were constrained to admit that he was at least a formidable antagonist, whilst within the House of Commons there was a growing opinion that but for his unfortunate feud with the Radicals of Birmingham his claim to the post of lieutenant to Mr. Gladstone would have been indisputable. Mr. Gladstone himself, during 1873, more than once entrusted him with the duty of representing him during his own absence from the House of Commons, and the man who in 1870 was still without a seat in the Cabinet was three years later universally recognized as one of the few men in the front rank in English political life.

I have had occasion to mention already the feeling of his colleagues and subordinates in the Privy Council Office towards him. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that it was only on the part of those who were brought into almost daily contact with him that this feeling was entertained. The Vice-President of the Council touches many different departments of the public service, and has to do with an almost innumerable army of officials. There is, for example, the South Kensington Department, around which many disputes have gathered, and upon which many jealousies, professional and personal, are centred. I believe that I speak with accuracy the sentiments of the officers of that department when I say that, without any disparagement to the dis-

tinguished men who have succeeded Mr. Forster in the office of Vice-President of the Council, there is no one whose name is cherished so warmly as his, nor one who has left behind him a tradition of such unflinching loyalty towards all with whom, in his official capacity, he was brought in contact.

But there was another and still larger body of men than those associated with him in the public service with whom Mr. Forster had to deal. These were the school teachers of England. The author of the school system of our country, he was in a certain degree responsible for bringing into existence that great army of elementary teachers in whose hands the training of the children of the nation is now placed. When the Education Act was first put into operation, the confusion that necessarily existed in the educational districts almost amounted to chaos. It was no easy thing for the head of the Education Department to place himself in anything like satisfactory relations with the vast body of teachers who had to be suddenly enrolled in order to meet the new wants of the nation. Forster, however, made it his business to put himself into the closest possible connection with these men and women. Just as in his early days in Yorkshire he had delighted in the hours which he spent in his own schools at Burley or in those of Canon Jackson at Leeds, and had there acquired by personal observation a sympathetic knowledge of the teacher's difficulties and disappointments, so now, as Minister of Education, he lost no opportunity which offered itself of personally associating with those to whom the practical work of teaching had been entrusted. It mattered little that the teacher with whom he came in contact was a man of no influence, and perhaps of only moderate ability. His work formed the tie which united him with Forster; and he was certain to obtain the kindest and most sympathetic consideration for his trials and grievances if he laid them before him. Blunt indeed might be the manner in which Forster expressed himself, but beneath the blunt exterior his interlocutor speedily discovered the kindest of hearts and the most loyal of spirits; and thus it came to pass that, even at the time when Mr. Forster's name was being held up to execration by the leaders of the League, he had no more enthusiastic body of admirers in the country than the teachers of our common schools.

A word must be said here as to his personal position whilst he was a member of the 1868 Administration. The business of the country was at that time wonderfully prosperous, and he shared in its prosperity. At the end of 1871 he found

himself free from any kind of anxiety in pecuniary matters, and from that time forward he may be said to have been a rich man. Among other personal incidents of interest which marked the period was his election as a member of the distinguished little club known as Grillion's. He had long been a regular visitor at the Cosmopolitan, many members of which well remember as one of the features of the meetings his racy and vigorous talk upon all manner of subjects, great and small. He now became almost as regular in attendance at the famous dinners and breakfasts of Grillion's—at which none but the most distinguished Englishmen of their day are to be found, and at which the representatives of parties the most directly antagonistic are able to meet in friendly social intercourse. Forster's love of society was undoubtedly great. He delighted in frank and unrestrained conversation especially with those from whom he differed, and was never happier than when in argument he met a foeman worthy of himself. Under the tremendous pressure of his public work during these busy and eventful years, and amid all the perplexities and anxieties of his position as educational minister, he found a constant source of relaxation and recreation in those social engagements which his advancement in public estimation had opened to him.

How he impressed others who encountered him in social life may be learned from the following extracts from the memoir of the late Dr. Norman Macleod, whom he met at Balmoral whilst he was there in attendance upon the Queen:—“We have here,” says Dr. Macleod, writing from Balmoral, “Helps, and Mr. Forster, M.P., and we have had tremendous theological talks till 2 a.m. I keep my own not amiss. I have the greatest possible respect for Forster's abilities and truthfulness. . . . The Queen has asked me to remain till to-morrow. I hope to have another set-to with the M.P. He seems to expect the same, as he said ‘Hurrah!’ when he heard I was to remain.” A year later (1872) Dr. Macleod says in his diary: “I preached at Balmoral. . . . When last at Balmoral I met Forster, the Cabinet minister, there. He and Helps and I had great arguments on all theological subjects till very late. I never was more impressed by any man as deep, independent, *thoroughly* honest, and sincere. I conceived a great love for him. I never met a statesman whom for high-minded honesty and *justice* I would sooner follow. He will be Premier some day.”

CHAPTER XV.

VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES.

THE opening weeks of 1874 found Mr. Forster still standing face to face with a powerful political party which regarded him not so much with distrust as with positive hatred, and which was resolved, if possible, to secure his expulsion from the ranks of the Liberal party, if not from political life. His sins in connection with the passing of the Education Act, the chief of which was the fact that as minister of education he had thought more about education than about the disestablishment of the Church of England, were still bitterly remembered against him; and even in his own borough of Bradford there were many who had vowed that, if possible, they would punish him for his offences by depriving him of his seat in Parliament. Some idea of the malignant unfairness with which he was at that time being attacked by those who insisted that he alone was responsible for every portion of the Education Act with which they themselves did not happen to agree, and who were careful to distinguish between him and his colleagues, especially Mr. Gladstone, may be formed by a perusal of the language of one of the most powerful of their number, Mr. Chamberlain, then Mayor of Birmingham.

Speaking at a political supper in December, 1873, shortly after Mr. Forster had made his speech in vindication of the Education Act at Liverpool, Mr. Chamberlain said, "He observed in the newspapers that the Right Hon. Mr. Forster had been making what had been called a great speech at Liverpool. No doubt he had been somewhat dissatisfied with the results of recent elections, for, as they were aware, Bradford, Nottingham, Middlesbrough, and a score other places which he could mention, had followed the example of Birmingham, and returned candidates pledged to oppose Mr. Forster's favourite policy. In Bradford, at all events, the victory of the Liberals was significant, because it was probable

that the same party that had secured the majority upon the school board would also have a majority in the Parliamentary election, in which case the Right Hon. William Forster would no longer sit for Bradford, or, if he sat at all, would sit only as returned by Conservative votes. . . . He hoped they were prepared to make all necessary allowances for the fond affection of the parent. They all knew that a father looked with pride upon his first-born, and was apt to be rather charitable towards its defects, but at the same time he (Mr. Chamberlain) was bound to say that he thought Mr. Forster's infatuation about his little bill was really beyond all reasonable measure—(laughter and applause). There were two good features in the bill, the first being a provision made for the establishment of school boards, by which the ratepayers had obtained some control over the institutions to which they had contributed; and the second being the permissive enforcement of compulsory attendance at school. These principles, however, only existed in the bill in consequence of the agitation and discussion which was raised by the Education League. When they had considered those two principles they had considered almost all that they could accept as praiseworthy in the bill. Its effect in other respects had been to delay the great system of national education which Mr. Forster declared to be necessary and desirable at the time when he first undertook to bring forward his measure. His Act had thrown obstacles in the way of such a system. . . . It had thrown the education of the children of this country into the hands of two great ecclesiastical organizations, which had unfortunately been foremost in obstructing the prosperity and advancement of the nation. . . . The object of the Liberal party in England, throughout the continent of Europe and in America, had been to wrest the education of the young out of the hands of the priests, to whatever denomination they might belong. It would be the crowning triumph of what was called Mr. Forster's statesmanship that he had delayed this admirable consummation for perhaps another generation."

It is unnecessary to comment either upon the good taste of the speaker or upon the accuracy of his contention that it was only owing to the action of the League that the two main provisions in the bill—provisions which were contained in the original memorandum on the subject submitted to the Cabinet by Mr. Forster in 1869—had been included in the measure. But Mr. Chamberlain's language and temper deserve to be noted, inasmuch as they fairly represented the language and temper of most of the supporters of the League in those days,

when a large section of the English public still laboured under the belief that the 25th clause was a provision artfully devised by Mr. Forster for the purpose of adding to the endowments of the Church of England. How high feeling ran in Bradford was shown a few weeks after Mr. Chamberlain made his speech. Mr. Forster went down to visit his constituents, one of his objects being to meet those who differed from him, in order that he might discuss with them in a frank manner the contested points in his Education Bill. One of the leading Radicals invited the principal supporters of the League to meet Mr. Forster at dinner at his house. The dinner duly took place, and the education question was fully discussed. "Hammer and tongs after dinner," says Forster in his diary; "but I held my own, not committing myself, and not, I think, irritating them. — talked to me till half-past twelve, trying all he could to frighten me into concession. Bradford prospects look very bad." So bad, indeed, did his prospects at Bradford look at this time that one of his truest and kindest friends there, Mr. William Byles, the proprietor of the *Bradford Observer*, had already advised him to look out for a new constituency, as he did not see any hope of his being again returned by the old one.

Forster, however, was not a man who was easily frightened, and the difficulties and dangers which would have daunted some only nerved him to more resolute and vigorous action. Barely a week after the dinner at Bradford, when his prospects seemed so gloomy, the dramatically sudden and unexpected dissolution of the Parliament of 1868 took place. On Friday evening, January 23rd, 1874, the rumour that Parliament was to be dissolved began to circulate in well-informed quarters in London. The next morning the news fell like a thunderclap upon the country. The secret had been well kept, and for the best of all reasons, namely, that it had only existed for a few hours. Ministers were in the same position as private members. Not one of them had been able to take any preliminary steps towards preparing their constituents for the great and unexpected event by which a struggle which was destined to be of supreme importance in the history of the country was precipitated. Instantly after the issue of Mr. Gladstone's address to the electors of Greenwich, the members of the Cabinet dispersed in order to fight their own individual battles in the constituencies.

No one had a harder task before him than Mr. Forster. The Birmingham Radicals, who were at that time aspiring to supremacy in the counsels of their party, had chosen to make

him the scapegoat upon whose back were to be laid the sins of the whole Ministry; and in Bradford, at all events, they had succeeded in gaining a large number of supporters. Among these were the men who had really formed the election committee of 1868, when Mr. Forster stood with Mr. Miall. When Forster reached Bradford by an early train from London on that Saturday on which all England was ringing with the news of the dissolution, he found that the committee of 1868 could no longer be relied upon, and that even his old election agent had decided that he could not again act for him. It was a heavy blow, but he set to work at once with his own thoroughness and energy to organize victory for himself. His diary shows what was the work which he got through on that first day of the contest.

"*January 24th.*— . . . Went down to Bradford with Stansfeld, he going to Halifax, I to Bradford. . . . Went first to Victoria Hotel, dear Eds [Mr. E. P. Arnold-Forster] meeting me at the station; then on to Wade's office, where I found Semon. Wade told me that he could not act as agent—had told Killick; so I went on to Killick. Sent for dear old Byles. Wrote my address. Gave it Byles for placards, and sent it to *Telegraph* people, who soon got it into later edition—so I first in the field. Engaged circus for Monday night, not being able to get hall. Nothing hardly could look more dreary. An agent to appoint; no committee, no chairman, no rooms, no organization—everybody trying to frighten me except Killick; but I believe I shall win. Some comfort from M—, the nine-hours man, as I was leaving; and from W—, the manufacturer, who went with me by train and was very loyal. Returned to Burley and my dearest by 5.55 train. Left Eds, who was most useful, to hear result of Liberal Registration Caucus, which was simply to ask Miall whether he would stand, and meet again on Tuesday."

It may seem strange to some that Forster should have been thus cruelly deserted by the men who but a few years before had shed tears of joy when they learned that he had passed safely through the ordeal of an election petition; and it may be that here and there harsh judgments will be passed upon the character of the Bradford Liberals because of their action at this time. But so far as the overwhelming majority of the Liberals of Bradford were concerned, though they turned from him and fought him, they never lost their old respect for him, and were no worse friends with him in private because they believed that they were bound to become his enemies in public. It was not merely the education question

upon which a difference had arisen between him and his party. The larger question of party organization was also at issue. Bradford was one of the first towns in England to adopt the Birmingham method of organization, commonly known as the Caucus. Some of the leading party men in the borough sought, even so early as 1874, to raise the question of the independence of representatives. They held that it was the duty of a member to submit himself unreservedly to the judgment of the local committee or caucus, and that, no matter how long he might have sat for a particular constituency, and no matter how great might be his public services or his reputation, he was bound to acknowledge, not the constituency as a whole, but the caucus as the master of his fate, and to leave it to that body to determine whether he should or should not be allowed to continue to represent the electors in Parliament. This contention was set forth with great plainness later on, when Mr. Forster had to wage vigorous battle against a principle so degrading to the position of a member of Parliament; but even so early as 1874 it had begun to make itself apparent, and it added to the bitterness of the relations between himself and the official organization of the Liberal party in Bradford.

To one of his old friends, Mr. L. Tylor, who worked vigorously on his behalf in this 1874 election, I am indebted for some reminiscences of Forster's relations with his constituents which may be fitly introduced here: "I think my most noteworthy impression of your dear husband," writes Mr. Tylor to Mrs. Forster, "was the extraordinary relation that existed between him and his constituents. It was very strange, but Forster was more a Yorkshireman than the Yorkshiremen themselves—not in the popular idea of Yorkshiremen as being rugged and bluff and outspoken and strong, although in these points he was typical of his adopted county—but especially in his reticence. Any one who knows Craven will see the curious inheritance of character which the men take from their country. Rugged and bare, uninviting, often forbidding, there seems so little tenderness in the scarred and lonely moor, that a stranger might pass by without guessing at the wealth of life hidden in its numberless recesses, its nestling woods, its secret pastures. You know it, and can bear witness that, once having found the treasures it conceals from inquisitive eyes, you would not exchange it for all the flaunting luxuriance and sweet softness of the South. It is so with the seemingly hard men of the North. They hide their feelings, and would sooner be misjudged than judged by any but their own kith

and kin. And they do not mind hard judgment, and hard blows, given openly and fairly by their own people. They will not yield, and they will not ask their enemy to yield. They are fighting folk, and they expect the weaker man to go to the wall without favour. They found a man after their own heart in Forster. It seems all so strange and extraordinary to any one who knew the incessant heart-burnings and divisions among the Bradford Liberals, and the determined set their leaders made against the man who was the truest representative of all their best qualities that England could have furnished, to be able to say that the Bradford men liked Forster better than any one else, even when they voted against him. But I have been told this scores of times, and the text ran pretty much the same: 'We are men, and stick to our party; but there never was any one like Forster.' I recollect in 1874, when there was a great meeting at St. George's Hall, talking with one of the leaders. He said, 'We can fill the hall in five minutes with our own men if we choose;' and I said, 'We shall be delighted, for they will leave the hall Forster's men.' 'Never fear, lad,' he replied; "but we'll do fair.' That night there were some four thousand people there, and half of these were in well-distinguished patches, sitting perfectly quiet, never applauding and never hissing, save just enough to show what they could have done had they wished. Forster pointed them out to me, and said, 'They will all vote dead against me, but they do not like it.' And so they did vote, and so they did not like voting, but they acted with what they thought their party."

This vivid and truthful sketch will give the reader some idea of the peculiar relations between Forster and his Radical constituents; though no words can enable any one who has not lived in Yorkshire, and enjoyed a knowledge both of the strength and of the weakness of the Yorkshire character based upon personal experience, fully to comprehend the nature of those relations. That election of 1874 was, in Forster's case, a kind of Homeric fight between himself on the one hand, and his old friends the Radicals and the caucus-men of Bradford on the other. Thanks to the energy with which he had acted at the outset, he had got the start. Before the local leaders could determine upon candidates to represent them, he was already in the field. On the Monday evening following the Saturday on which he reached Bradford, he addressed his first meeting in the Alhambra, which was crowded in every part. "I saw that meeting was against me," he notes in his diary, "but well heard, think I somewhat turned them." His speech

was a defence of the Education Act, and of the freedom of choice which the poor parent was allowed to have as to the school to which his children should be sent. One personal appeal he made to the electors: "The enormous majority of my electors," he said, "are working men, and I do not stand here to flatter or fawn upon them. I never do so. But I may ask you to remember two or three facts, and bear them in mind when you fix your cross upon the ballot list and vote either for or against me; and these are, that, in the first place, I was an old ten-hours man; in the second place, I have a claim to have done something to give you the vote; in the third place, what I have done in getting you the vote, I shall try to do for your fellow-labourers, the agricultural labourers. I have a right to be believed about that because of what I have done. Fourthly, I have had something to do with giving you freedom in voting. I do not think many people have had more to do with it. I ask you to remember these facts when you may be asked to vote against me because of this 25th clause."

At the close of his speech Mr. Forster had to submit to that which is always a favourite performance among the ardent politicians of the West Riding during an election—the "heckling" of the candidate. This consists in pouring in upon him from every quarter of the room, in the most rapid succession, questions upon every conceivable subject, some of which have been framed with remarkable ingenuity, for the special purpose of embarrassing the unfortunate person to whom they are addressed. Forster was one of the few men, perhaps, who really enjoyed this process. There was something to him positively exhilarating in this brisk give-and-take in argument and assertion before a crowded audience. His speeches often moved men deeply; but it was in his replies to a cross-examination more or less hostile, that he afforded the greatest delight to his auditors. Of course, upon this occasion, he had to submit to a fire of fierce interrogatories on the subject of the Education Act, and he stuck boldly to his guns. One person asked why he had not waited until he was asked by the Liberal Association before presenting himself as a candidate. "I am blamed," replied Mr. Forster, "because being your member I have asked for re-election. Now, it has been the ruling practice in your borough, as elsewhere, for sitting members to seek re-election, and is a man who has served you for thirteen years not to come forward and ask you whether you will say you are willing to return him again? And has a man a right to be a member of the

Cabinet, and a member of the Government of the country which has advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament, and must he himself wait for any meeting, however important, before he takes his part in carrying out that advice? I deny I have broken away from the leaders of the party (in Bradford). I can show my friend that there is no opinion that I have deserted, and if there has been a change of opinions on this Education Act it is not on my part, and that I hold the opinions I formerly held. My friends ask me whether I take comfort in deserting the leaders of the party. What I do take comfort in is in not deserting my own convictions."

The picture of the struggle thus commenced, given in his own diary, though bare and uncoloured, is full of suggestion:—

"*January 27th.*—Matters still looking up. A good nucleus of a committee at our rooms at Sunbridge. Agree to send a circular to every voter, asking him to return it if willing to support me, and ordered 25,000 copies of corrected *Telegraph* report of my speech also to send. Tories held a meeting, and, with John Tayler in the chair, agreed not to bring out a candidate but to support me. Changed afterwards into supporting me and Ripley. John Tayler told me at hotel. I said I was obliged, but there must be no misunderstanding; I should remain a Liberal as before. He behaved like a thorough gentleman, saying that was the clear understanding.

"*January 28th.*—Went by 9.18 train to Bradford. At meeting at Alhambra last evening, called of the Liberal clubs by ticket (I having given up to them the room), Godwin brought out in place of Miall [who had retired on plea of ill-health], and Hardaker [working-man] adopted; that is, two candidates started in opposition to me. A meeting of friends and supporters called at our large committee-room, which went off fairly well. Sam Lister came, and spoke most vigorously and heartily for me; also Joe Oddy, Simeon Townsend, etc. I spoke to very large meeting in Pullan's Music Hall, and carried meeting with me. Illingworth had given me excellent opening the night before, by saying Bradford ought to show itself so dissatisfied with the author of the Educational Act as not to be content to have him as its representative. Thompson moved vote to me, seconded by Wade, and carried by immense majority. Lane still in the chair. Dear Eds again with me. We all took up our abode at the Victoria. Two ominous Home Rulers saw me at my large committee-room, but I answered Home Rule question frankly at meeting, and I think that answered.

"*January 29th.*—Steam getting up; friends flocking in; Killick working well; but perplexities great. Began my ward meetings. Meetings on the whole good, especially the last, where Walter Robertshaw asked me many questions, and moved vote against me on account of 25th clause, but I beat him by large majority, and carried my vote at all the meetings."

And so the fight went on, the "steam getting up" more and more on both sides. Indeed, Forster, who never sought to deceive himself when he was engaged in work of this kind, notes in his diary the "very enthusiastic meeting for Godwin and Hardaker" held one day, and his own defeat by his opponents at another, remarking, "I fought them fiercely, knowing pluck my only chance."

"*February 2nd.*—Went in early; saw deputation of butchers; explained my action as regards cattle, and satisfied them. In afternoon an hour or so on my speech. Matters picking up; Ward committees well at work. . . . To my meeting at St. George's Hall at 7.30. Immense number of platform friends. Room crowded to the full—the finest meeting I ever attended, and I think my best speech. Enormous majority for me—not many questions, but meeting convulsed with laughter by Dicky Delaney's friendly question. Overwhelming majority for me."

"*February 3rd.*—Steam up nearly to bursting all day. Went round to all the committee-rooms in the evening, to stir them up to work. A healthy look everywhere. After return from tour round committee-rooms, put my cross (×) against the calculation of polling which I thought most likely, and put myself down for 12,000 votes. Very strong articles in *Times* and *Daily News* against a letter, from Sir Titus Salt (Godwin and Hardaker's chairman), disowning me as a Liberal. We printed many thousand handbills, containing the *Times* article, and best part of *Daily News*, and I took round late editions of the *Telegraph* containing them.

"*February 4th.*—The polling day. Soon after 9 went with Law and Edward, in Law's open carriage, round the committee-rooms and polling-places. Our friends cheerful everywhere; but at Little Horton I feared the polling was slack. However, as afternoon came on, our friends were more cheerful, and declared that they were nearly polled out. I voted at the East Ward about 3, for self and Ripley. The enemy had covered the walls with 'Plump for Ripley,' but we had posted over it; and we also covered the walls with, 'Split for Forster.' Killick, Eds, and I dined together at the Victoria

about 5, and went to the counting at 6. The first paper I caught sight of had the two middle crosses (Godwin and Hardaker); but I soon became comfortable, as at every table I saw my crosses turned up. The actual counting began about 9, and ended about 11. I went back to the hotel, where Jane with Flo had arrived, to tell them I believed myself safe, and then went back for the final declaration, which was made by the town clerk before midnight—Forster, 11,945; Ripley, 10,223; Godwin, 8398; Hardaker, 8115. I proposed thanks to mayor, town clerk, etc., Godwin seconded, Hardaker supported. About 20,050 voters polled, only 32 bad papers.

“February 5th.—A congratulatory day. We all went back by 4.50 train. All the dear villagers out to receive me. I made them a short speech, and then went to dinner. Dear Mr. Jackson came to rejoice with us.”

It is hardly necessary to add to this picture of a hard fight, such as Mr. Forster delighted in when it was forced upon him, deeply as he undoubtedly felt the defection of his old friends. The reader will, however, be able to form some idea of the spirit and energy with which he threw himself into a difficult task from these extracts from his diary. The result of the election was certainly an immense personal triumph for Mr. Forster. Although he had to fight the whole Radical party in the borough, and its official organization, he succeeded in polling a majority of all the electors on the register. “I am glad to believe,” he said, in his address of thanks, “that the contest has left no unkind feeling between me and the minority, who, chiefly upon one particular question, have thought it right to oppose me. While I regret this disagreement, I respect their opinions.”

But although a notable victory thus fell to the lot of Mr. Forster himself, the Liberal party as a whole was defeated throughout the country. That the defeat was due in part to the course which the Government had taken on the question of education is not to be disputed. There were other questions, however, which had contributed at least as largely to bring about that defeat, whilst there was also an undoubted popular reaction towards Conservatism, to a certain extent due to the extreme character of the opinions held and the proposals put forth by the left wing of the Liberal party. In the middle of February the Cabinet met, and it was resolved not to wait for the meeting of the new House of Commons, but, in accordance with the precedent set in 1868, to resign forthwith.

To his Wife.

“Education Department, Whitehall,
“February 17th, 1874.

“Well, I am getting through my work quite as well as I could expect, and have to-day made my minutes about the poor beasties, both for Huxley and Simon. . . . We had a very interesting evening—decided practically to resign, though the papers to-day anticipate our final decision, as matters have to be arranged with the Queen.”

“February 18th, 1874.

“We are now really resigned, and most assuredly I am resigned to the resignation. It is very pleasant and touching to me to have such hearty and regretful leave-takings from the officials. . . . Who my successor will be I do not know. I have very nearly right-sided my papers, but am up to the ears in them.”

From his Diary.

“*February 20th, 1874.*—Last day at office. Farewells, and, after writing to my dearest, my last act at the office, cleared out. Low work; everybody, almost, really sorry to lose me, and I depressed by leaving the workmen, though glad to leave the work. A headache, so after a slight dinner at the Athenæum with Hutton, off to bed, finding a kind note from Smith, saying he was not going to follow me, but Sandon was.”

During the session of 1874, he took a prominent part in the House, frequently leading it in the absence of Mr. Gladstone, and he at the same time busied himself much with public affairs out of Parliament, especially with questions affecting the slave trade, regarding which the strength of his feeling certainly did not diminish as time passed.

The session did not pass over without another attempt, on the part of the League party, to introduce an alteration in the Education Act. This came in the shape of a motion by Mr. Richard for the abolition of the 25th clause. Forster stoutly opposed it on the old ground of the injustice which would be done to the indigent parent in compelling him to send his child to a school of the character of which he might not approve. To his surprise and regret, Mr. Richard was supported by some of his old colleagues in Mr. Gladstone's

Government who had been heartily with him at the time when the bill was passed. On a division, Mr. Richard's proposal was defeated by 373 to 128 votes. "I could not help telling Goschen," remarks Forster, "that they had not got much by throwing me over."

In June the question of appointing a Minister of Education was raised by Sir Lyon Playfair, and Forster gave his support to the proposal, his experience having led him to feel that the Education Department could never receive the attention it deserved until it was placed under the charge of a minister who should have full responsibility for it, and who would be able to devote all his time to educational matters. It happened, however, that this view was not that held by Mr. Gladstone, who looked at the question from the standpoint of an ex-Prime Minister, and as the leader of a party. Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, begging him to ask Forster not to support Sir Lyon Playfair's motion. The letter did not reach Mr. Forster's hands until after the debate had taken place. It gave him, however, the opportunity of saying what he felt with regard to the changed attitude of his colleagues on the education question.

To LORD GRANVILLE.

"80, Eccleston Square,

"June 16th, 1874, 12.30 p.m.

"MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

"Your note enclosing Mr. Gladstone's note has just reached me by post, and, as you see, the debate was last evening.

"I ought, however, to say that, while Playfair was speaking, and when it was known by him and others that I was intending to support him, Goschen came and told me of Mr. Gladstone's letter to you, and somewhat strenuously asked me to be silent. I replied that I could not then alter my course, and that I felt confident that, if I had the opportunity of explaining to Mr. Gladstone my position, both as regarded the pending debate, and the present phases of the education question, he would not press me to do so.

"You say that you thought I had been much dissatisfied with the meeting held at your house before the debate on the 25th clause, and that my dissatisfaction appeared to extend to yourself.

"Pray do not think any such thing. I never was dissatisfied with you, and never expect to be; and as to that

particular meeting, I thought that, like yourself, you showed real consideration for my position.

“As regards the meeting and the division and debate last Wednesday, I do not feel that I ought on personal grounds to object to my late colleagues changing their votes; but I thought, and still think, that so sudden and marked a change, as twelve members of the late Government voting against a clause which that Government maintained up to the end of last session, was not an advantageous step for the party, and I think the division list supports this view.

“That, however, is my own opinion on a matter in which others are as likely to be right as myself; but I must add that I think what happened on Wednesday prevents the public from supposing my late colleagues to be responsible for what I say or do in education matters, and also makes the public expect that in these matters I should not conceal my convictions.

“You see, I have had to bear the brunt of this education battle. Without doubt Mr. Gladstone and my colleagues were most considerate to me during the fight, and it is quite true that Mr. Gladstone made most generous concessions to Ripon and myself; but then it must not be forgotten that in all probability the Government would have been beaten, and badly beaten, if the battle had been fought on different grounds.

“Mr. Gladstone always fully acknowledged this as regarded his concessions to what was the opinion of our Cabinet with regard to the 25th clause; and both the dissolution and Wednesday's division have proved that the Cabinet was right.

“Well, this fight brought me into collision with many members of that section of the party to which I was supposed to belong. Their opposition has been constant and bitter, and has resulted in a most determined effort to drive me out of Parliament. Now many of my late colleagues have gone over to my opponents upon that very question, which was the test question of my late election.

“I do not complain of this—of course they must do as they think right; but if they speak out on one part of the question, I think they must not complain at my speaking out on other parts; especially as it so happens that, whilst I differ from my old allies on the 25th clause and the religious bearings of the question, I agree with them on most of the purely educational questions, such, for instance, as this ministry of education, and the much more important matter of universal compulsion.

“Excuse my writing thus fully, but I wanted to explain

to you and Mr. Gladstone why I do not think I am a 'dissolvent,' because I feel that under all the circumstances it is due to myself, and to the public, and to this education cause, which I have much at heart, that I should not feel myself prevented from speaking out on any branch of the education question, though making it clear, as I did last night, that I am speaking only for myself.

"Yours ever truly,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"Having heard of Mr. Gladstone's note, I did what I could to prevent a division.

"I have reason to believe that a large majority of our side would have voted with Playfair—a much larger proportion than voted with Lowe against me on Wednesday."

A little later in the session (July 1), Mr. Dixon brought in a bill for making compulsory attendance general, and in favour of compulsory establishment of school boards. Forster spoke in support of compulsory attendance, but the bill was not allowed to proceed. The only other incident of importance in connection with public affairs during the spring and summer was his appearance at Sheffield, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stones of the new board schools, when he received such a welcome as was due to the author of the Education Act.

Naturally his attendance on his Parliamentary duties, now that he was out of office, though steady, was not so constant as it had been in previous years. He was once more permitted to indulge in some of those pleasures in which, from his youth upwards, he had delighted; and he was now the possessor of a property in the Lake District, which enabled him to enjoy thoroughly some of the most beautiful scenery in Europe. Early in 1873 he had purchased the little property of Fox Ghyll, Ambleside, a picturesque cottage which nestles at the foot of a richly wooded hill between Grasmere and Windermere, and which for Forster had the additional attraction of being close to Fox How, the residence of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Arnold. From the time when he became the owner of Fox Ghyll, it was almost the greatest pleasure of his life to spend a few days or weeks there, in the fine air of the hills, and in the midst of scenery which had a special attraction for him. His release from the cares of office enabled him to enjoy this pleasure largely in the spring and summer of 1874. Fox Ghyll became his holiday home, and many of the brightest

and happiest hours of his life were those which he spent there, with his wife and children—himself full of a childlike delight in all his surroundings, and as eager in his pedestrianism and hill-climbing as he had ever been in his early days of mountaineering in Switzerland.

This happy nook, between lake and hill, became his place of refuge and recreation whenever the labours and anxieties of public life weighed too heavily upon him. It was not solitude, however, which he sought at Fox Ghyll. Throughout his life he had delighted in the society of those dear to him, and in his country home it was his chief pleasure to share with his family the enjoyment of the beautiful scenery which lay within easy reach of his door. No other spot on earth could ever replace Wharfeside, the home of his manhood and married life, and the scene of his first great struggles and successes, in his affections; yet, from 1873 onwards, it was to Fox Ghyll that he naturally turned for relief and sunshine, and the mountains and lakes of Westmoreland became almost as dear to him as the familiar hills of Yorkshire and the busy valleys around Bradford.

One important result of his release from the chains of office was that, in the autumn of 1874, he was enabled to carry out a long-cherished project and to visit America, a land which had long possessed the deepest interest for him, and which had been made doubly dear to him by the fact that it held his father's grave. That he had many friends in the United States need hardly be said. Not a few of the leading Americans of their time—Emerson, Adams, Sumner, and others—were his personal acquaintances, and had enjoyed his hospitality in England. But beyond these he had countless friends whom he had never seen in the flesh, and the names of many of whom were absolutely unknown to him. These might be roughly divided into two classes. There were, first, the American Quakers and abolitionists, who admired him for his father's sake and for his own unceasing efforts in the cause of the slave; and, next, the politicians of the North, who knew that in Forster the Union had found one of its most staunch and powerful supporters in its hour of trial.

The visit, which, as usual when travelling, he described in a series of letters to his wife, was a great success. He had as his companion his cousin, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, grandson of the first baronet. They left Liverpool for Quebec by the *Circassian*, September 10th. "The instant I got on the wharf at Quebec," he writes, "while waiting for my luggage, I had a letter given me from the manager of the Cooper Institute at

New York, taking it for granted that I was intending a lecturing tour in the States, and would begin with New York, and offering his services to work the whole affair up if I would put myself in his hands, and also the net receipts, up to two hundred dollars. . . . A telegram also from Dufferin, asking me to go to Government House when at Ottawa."

After receiving much hospitality and attention at Quebec, the travellers went on to Montreal, where another round of sight-seeing and kindly festivity awaited them. Naturally he was much interested in the schools. "At the schools I visited to-day only the head and perhaps the second teacher men; the rest young women, most of them good-looking. The schools large—one 650, another 400. Religious teaching everywhere, but no catechism in the Protestant schools, and no attempt to separate one Protestant sect from another, either as regards children or teachers. No conscience clause for the Catholic schools; so, in villages where the Protestants are not numerous enough to get up a school for themselves, the children must, Dr. J—— tells me, have Roman Catholic religious teaching, and the parents are therefore the more inclined to go westward, away from the priests. The schools mainly supported by rates, but the Protestant and Catholic ratepayers can and do mark their rates, so that they go respectively to Protestant and Catholic schools—a vile practice which no one defends, but declared to be a necessity." Whilst at Montreal he was entertained at dinner, and was troubled at meeting some influential men who talked of separation from the mother-country, and either independence or annexation to the United States. "The dinner was long; a health to the Queen and Governor-General, and then my health. My reply was difficult—in one respect more difficult than if reporters had been present, because it was hard to draw the line between after-dinner talk and serious speech. But I managed, I think, to convey to them my earnest desire to keep up a union with them, and also my desire that they should foster a national feeling as no cause of disunion, but rather as the only possible condition of union in the future relation of equality to which I looked forward; bringing it in by alluding to the work the influential men before me had to do—reconciliation of two races with different religions, of Federal power with State rights, their success in both tasks making me hope that they would reconcile their growth with continuance of the English connection. It was well received, I think not merely from compliment to their guest."

At Ottawa they were received with great kindness by

Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, and under his guidance they "did" the lions of the place. He had not a little talk with Lord Dufferin on the future of Canada in its relation to the empire, and was specially pleased to find that the "very strong words" which he had spoken on that subject had been "a real help" to the Governor-General, who had been somewhat discouraged by the tone of one or two prominent public men in England, who seemed not only willing but positively wishful to let Canada go. In a pleasant, leisurely way, Forster and his companion passed through Canadian territory, enjoying the sights which they witnessed, both those which were novel and those which reminded them of home, and everywhere being received with marks of attention and respect. On several occasions Bradford men in trouble found their way to him, and he had to listen to their story, and give them the assistance for which they asked. He heard much, too, of the inconsiderate dealings of the Colonial Office with Canada in bygone days, and lost no opportunity of preaching increasing union between the mother-country and her children on the Federal basis. At last, in the early part of October, New York was reached, and here, as might have been expected, Forster found himself among friends. "Tell it not to the profane," he writes, "but I must confess to a frequent instinctive surprise that our kinsmen reply to us in English. They are so strange-looking and yet so like as well as unlike us. The exceeding quickness of thought and the promptness of action contrast curiously with the deliberate slowness of speech. I think this contrast is the strongest first impression. At the little station at Garrisons, to my great delight, the station-master had his legs on the table, and no questions from me could get them off. The streets and houses in New York are grand enough. Buxton and I went to the play, a drama by Mark Twain, 'The Gilded Age,' chiefly a skit on land speculations and Congress life, sensational enough, but the tone healthy and entirely un-French. Cyrus Field very early found us out, and the day was chiefly spent in calls, leaving letters, and the like. In the evening, the *Tribune* reporter interviewed me, but I courteously told him nothing. I have been again asked to lecture, and my refusal seems somewhat to astonish.

"Yesterday (Friday) was a clear, bright day, with hot sun, ending in a beautiful but cool evening. Mr. Neilson, the President of the Board of Education Commission, called with old Mr. Cooper, a very generous millionaire, eighty-four years old, active and shrewd, the founder of the Cooper's Institute,

who told me his mother could remember a *cheval de frise* across New York to keep off the Indians. I was taken to two large schools—boys in 23rd Street and girls in 20th Street. The teaching is absolutely free, and all classes attend. I was told many of the parents were moneyed folk, and clearly some of the children, by dress and look, were of the poorest; no coloured children. The plan was to gather them all together and make me make speeches. I was glad to see the mistresses disliked this, and wished me to see the classes thoroughly, which I mean doing. I did, however, try with a newspaper the children of eleven in the primary school (the age they generally leave), and found they all, both boys and girls, could read. They were dismissed in classes by music—the girls with a dancing trip. Oh dear! the gestures and intonations with which a young minx of eleven or twelve recited in the midst of the big room was a sight to be remembered. The Bible is read at the beginning of the first lesson, but without note or comment. A compulsory law is to come in force next January.

“*Sunday evening, October 11th, 1874. . . .* We had a curious experience yesterday.

“If there be a political party upon which I have looked with abhorrence, it is the old Democratic party of New York, that union of the rich merchants with the rough Irish which was the great support of the slave power. Well, there is a caucus which ruled that party, and there was, and is, a society or club which ruled the caucus—the Tammany Society owning the Tammany Hall, the very temple of corruption in former days, somewhat cleansed nowadays, but still the centre from which the wires are pulled.

“Well, Abraham Hewitt, a large iron-master and a very good fellow, turns out to be a leading Democrat, and he took us yesterday to the great caucus New York meeting of the year, in Tammany Hall, at which the Democrats nominated their candidates for mayor, aldermen, etc. A large room, with some six hundred well-dressed men, but many of them rough enough, and most of them smoking; a sprinkling of gentlemen, *really* using influence, but most careful not to appear to do so. The chairman tried hard to get us on the platform, but I resolutely refused; and everybody was most courteous to us, allowing us to go down into the committee-room, where the disputed elections of delegates were debated and decided in secret conclave. A large proportion of the delegates were Irish, and clearly enough the materials were most combustible. But in the full meeting there was only a sham difference of

opinion, the wire-pullers having well rehearsed the performance. In fact, the party seemed almost hopelessly enslaved to them by the very completeness of their organization. The speaking was generally clear, but one or two men were furious, especially one, Captain R——, an old Tammany 'war-horse,' much flattered by being told that the Englishman had heard of him—it was not added with what character. The convention began about four and lasted till past seven, when Hewitt took us off to the Manhattan Club, where the aristocratic Democrats congregate; a handsome, large, well-furnished house, much better than the Union Club. They gave us there a most amusing dinner, good wine and cookery, and a very merry party. . . . I put them upon all their most tender subjects, and bore my testimony as to their past misdoings, but I was quite prepared to admit that there is much to be said for State rights against the central power, now that slavery is abolished. As to the state of the South, the two parties diametrically contradicted each other, but I think that we shall get at some truth between them."

Desiring to visit the West, and above all to see his father's grave at Friendsville before the severe weather set in, Forster did not stay long in New York. The statue of Lincoln was to be unveiled by President Grant at Springfield, and thither he made his way, *viâ* Chicago.

"Leland Hotel, Springfield, 6.30 a.m.,

"October 15th.

"Scene as follows:—good-sized room; large coal fire; check table in the middle, I sitting on it, a dozen legs by my side. Buxton curled up in the corner with his head in his rug, taking out his sleep; some eighteen or twenty citizens doing ditto on chairs or floor; a large pointer before the fire, most comfortable of all. The town full to overflowing for the demonstrations. We had engaged rooms; but they consider they have kept their word by promising to fix us up after breakfast, when I shall make myself known to Vice-President Wilson. Grant is here, and so is Sherman. . . . Distance from Chicago, 185 miles. After writing to thee yesterday (from Chicago) we took a carriage and pair—'livery' they call it—and drove to their ugly sandy park, and saw the furthest limits of the fire, which swept away detached houses in the wood, not killing the trees. We called, I am glad to say, on the Rev. Robert Collyer, who, you know, came to see us; he is one of their best and most famous preachers, was son of a Blubberhouse blacksmith, worked at Blubberhouse mill, full

of Wharfedale reminiscences, and delighted to see me. 'Your hair is grey,' I said. 'So is yours.' 'You look more worldly; you used to have a saint-like look.' A man in the hotel took pity on me as I was wandering about the corridors, and in showing me the way said, 'What are you doin' here? I suppose fixin' the clocks.' . . . Collyer's church, a detached suburban building, had just been finished at a cost of \$200,000; half-burnt down, but rebuilt for another \$70,000. His pay is \$5,600, and New Yorkers offer him \$10,000; but he is 'clear grit,' and, if he leaves Chicago at all, will not take an advance. He sent his best remembrances to you, and was very pleasant. He had an ex-Hicksite Quakeress with him, who knew all about my father. . . . Breakfast over! and, hurrah! we have rooms, so I am dressed, and, barring my wide-awake, fit for the best of them—frock-coat and white waistcoat. I send an extract from the Springfield paper, mentioning 'the Right Hon. Forrester,' and giving a grand poem, which was recited yesterday by a general."

"Rock Island, Harper's Hotel, October 17th.

"Our day at Springfield was very interesting, but also very tiring. After posting my letter we sallied off to try to find V. P. Wilson, who, you know, is an old U.S. senator of Massachusetts, and who once dined with us. We discovered him at Mr. C——'s. Wilson at once, in the kindest manner, took charge of us, and took us off in a carriage to the Executive Mansion, where Governor Beveridge was entertaining the President and party. Grant was at breakfast, but soon came in for introduction. It appeared he did not identify me till the afternoon, when I had given him Schenck's letter, but he was civil and more willing to talk than I had expected. . . . There were divers women, governors, and senators, to whom I was presented. All the men who had had to do with their foreign politics, such as Judd, an old friend and supporter of Lincoln's, and his minister at Berlin, knew me, and were most kind; but I was an utter puzzle to most—a thin, black-eyed, much-haired, unclerical-looking individual, who had been Grant's first chaplain, hoping I was John Forster, Dickens's biographer, and proportionately disappointed. Buxton's 'Sir' is a grievous stumbling-block. I believe it is considered a name. He is generally called Mr. Buxton. General Sherman puzzled over his card, and said, 'Sir? What is it? Rev. Fowell Buxton?' The papers have him 'Secretary T. Fowler Buxton;' and after I had carefully spelt out our names, the hotel clerk here wrote out a pass card for the arsenal, 'Sir

Forrester and T. Buxton.' But to return to our demonstration. . . . The crowd was large, very large for a town of twenty thousand people, and it was interesting to see the well-to-do farmers flocking in from what is, it is said, the richest farming country in the States. The procession was a fearfully long affair, and we went miles round in order to pass Lincoln's house, an unpretending wooden building, detached, but in a street. At last we reached the cemetery, a wood, in which was the obelisk, and in front of it a veiled statue and a pedestal large enough for a well-filled platform. Here I was introduced to several West Point generals, Macdowell and Pope, who commanded large armies in the war, and was at once recognized by Sherman. There were ten to fifteen thousand of crowd in front, and their patience was marvellous. The 'exercises' lasted for hours. There was a laudable endeavour to bring in all elements. The prayer was by the Bishop of the Methodist African Episcopal Church from Baltimore, a full-blooded negro; a company of negro volunteers in Zouave uniform in a place of honour; and I must say the negro prayer and the negro clothes excelled in taste on the whole. The statue was unveiled by the mother and a sister of some convent which had sent nurses to the war, and I think it gave pleasure to have two Britishers assisting. . . . Grant's speech, though read, was poor, incoherent, and unmeaning, but I think his bad speaking is one of his good points, and no wonder in this much-belectured country. . . . Nevertheless the occasion was one of the greatest interest, realizing, as it did, Lincoln's wonderful career; his rise from the lowest step of the ladder, hardly able to read; his rare integrity and political honesty which made the people believe in him; his genial humorous sympathy, which made his neighbours love him, and the width and depth of his judgment, which made all the generals and politicians around me confess that his murder took from the country its best pilot. There was a weather-beaten countryman on the platform, who had been his friend in early life, a little his senior, with whom I shook hands, who made me understand the circumstances of his early life."

After the ceremony there was a reception, with tea, at which the President shook hands with all who presented themselves, and then, at 10.30, a banquet at which speeches were made until past two in the morning, one of the toasts being Mr. Forster's health. His experience on this occasion led him to entertain a great respect both for the patience and the powers of physical endurance of the American people.

One further extract from his letter relating to the Springfield ceremony must be given, as it casts a characteristic light upon a virtue which he always held in the highest admiration: "I took refuge in General Sherman's room, where collected Generals Pope and Mac-Dowell, and other officers. One or two of them were picking holes in Lincoln—his coarse stories and cunning appointments,—but all this did not come to much, explicable by his passion for humour. Against them this story by Judd: When he was in one of his hardest fights with Douglas, who was a strong pro-slavery man, Judd looked over the notes of one of his speeches, and said this would not do for their audience, not anti-slavery enough, in expression rather than substance. Lincoln's reply was, 'This is all I feel, and I would rather lose the election than mislead the people even by an adjective.'"

They went on from Springfield to Colorado, the novel scenery and the life of the West interesting Forster immensely. He took the opportunity of seeing something of the miners and their ways, and seems on the whole to have been favourably impressed by them. After spending some time among the mountains, they turned south to St. Louis, being fortunate in having the society of Professor Hayden, the head of the United States Surveying Department, for a portion of the journey. At St. Louis, a chief part of his business was to inquire after the welfare of some young men, the sons of villagers at Burley, who were anxious for tidings of them. Forster made it his first task to look up these wandering Yorkshiremen, and sent messages of a reassuring kind to their mothers in far-away Wharfedale. At St. Louis they once more encountered General Sherman, who gave them letters of introduction to leading people in New Orleans, to which city they next proceeded.

"New Orleans, November 2nd, 1874.

"We are now in the heart of the South, and we have had the luck to 'assist' at a most curious and critical election. Only think of my seeing to-day two long *queues* of negro voters crowding up to the poll to vote for coloured men, to keep up the coloured Government over their proud Creoles, with negro police officers guarding the poll, and twenty companies of the United States army in the city and State, and five ships of war in the river, ready to aid them; three companies stationed in the Court House. On leaving St. Louis, General Sherman said, 'You will want no letters; you are as well known in America as in England.' I must say I

doubt this in the North, except with men conversant with affairs; but I suspect my 'record' has been well remembered in the South, hate being stronger than love. There was a tall, fine-looking woman in the car—about thirty, I should think—going to New Orleans to collect her rents, before going on to San Francisco to join her father and mother. We had much talk on social condition, effects of the war, etc. She said she was coming to Europe next year, so I told her I would get her into the House, and gave her my card. 'Oh,' she said, 'I know your name! Often have I wished you bound. You did us great injury during the war.' However, we talked on, and she said she was reminded of a young lady saying to her friend *à propos* of some undesirable young men, 'After all, they are human beings.' But I have a message from her to Lord Salisbury which is delightful. I quoted his saying about the natural allies, and said, 'You know he was your friend.' 'Oh yes,' she said, 'I know it, the dear old gentleman. I wish I could give him a smack (kiss) right between his eyes. Tell him so—that there is one American lady at least who will do that for him if he comes over. . . . Well, it is curious meeting you. How I have cursed you!' We parted, however, the best of friends."

Having witnessed the election, and studied with interest the local political conditions, the travellers made their way to that spot in Tennessee where the elder Forster had died more than twenty years before.

"Samuel Low's Ferry House, Holston River, Tennessee,
"Saturday Evening, November 7th, 1874.

"Here I am, in the very house in which my father died, untouched since his death, with the host and hostess who attended him, 'remembering everything as if it was yesterday,' and such striking, pleasant people! He, a tall, thin, upright, dark-eyed, lantern-jawed man, but with a kindly face, and a sweet voice and courteous, dignified manners, and his wife like a sunburnt saleswoman. But I must tell you how we came here. We left Chattanooga at 5.30 this morning, 112 miles, slow train, to Knoxville, passing through Athens, which Yardley Warner has told me was his head-quarters in his visits to his schools, and to which I had telegraphed. I therefore looked out, and true enough my man entered the car. We quickly found one another out, and arranged our places, and were off from Knoxville with a carriage and pair a little after one, having in the meantime got hold, to my

great comfort, of thy letters, and snatched a quiet dinner. . . . At last we reached General Low's (he is called General by way of affectionate respect: I find before the war he did command the militia volunteer gathering), a lone cottage, or rather farm, on the brow of the hill, but so deep in forest that we cannot see the river from the windows, though it is close to us. The autumn mist is over the hills and trees; there is no wind, no sound but the wood-cricket if we listen for them; sometimes the bells of the cattle; perhaps a slow melodious chant—I suppose a negro in the distance. The day has been hot, but is now one of our warmest autumn evenings; but the air dry, as we never have it. The leaves are mostly gone; but what are left are the richest tints, especially the red oaks. I never was in a place so completely and beautifully quiet. There is a religious gathering of the Cumberland Presbyterians at a school-house, two miles or so off. Two young women went off from the house on one good horse, just after we arrived; and now our host is gone, and I am writing in a low snug room, by the light of a tallow candle and the embers of a large fire of hickory logs. When we drove up, just before dusk, our host was standing in his verandah. 'Mr. Low,' I said, 'my name is Forster. My father died here twenty years ago. Do you remember him?' 'I should think I did. Oh yes.' And he received us as old friends. 'You are like him,' he said, 'but taller, a little.' He remembers everything—said almost at once, pointing to a chair, 'I had that made for your father. He asked me to do so, but he never got into it.' He said he was ailing the evening he came, but very anxious to get on to Lost Creek, a small Friends' settlement about twenty-five miles off, and started the next morning, but was taken ill in a field close by, and had to be brought back."

"Riley Lee's House, Friendsville,
"Monday Morning, November 9th.

"To return to General Low. Our bed-room was our sitting-room—one large bed; but I think we concealed the fact that one of us slept on a couch. I wished to do so; but Fowell would not let me. This was the room in which were Uncle Josiah and John Chandler. My father and William Holmes were in the next room—W. H. in the large bed, and my father in a truckle bed, which our hostess drew from under the bed, and which he preferred, having it put near the fire. There was great snugness about the house, and homely comfort in the ways of the host and hostess and their sons. . . . The house was not an inn, though travellers were sometimes enter-

tained. I asked Warner to give Low \$10 as payment for ourselves and horses, but his eyes glistened, and he said, 'Oh no; I could not think of taking anything from William Forster's son.' . . . Clearly my father had left the most true and vivid impression of his loving nature and Christian conduct, and next to that impression was the remembrance of William Holmes's constant devoted waiting on him. His eldest son, who well remembered my father, had tears in his eyes when we parted from him. . . . It was only eight miles to Friendsville by the right hand, but that was impossible to find—no signposts, no marked features in the hills, many roads or rather trails, and the dead leaves hiding the track in the forest more completely than snow. After getting wrong twice, we captured a boy, and arrived at the meeting-house about a quarter of an hour after they had sat down. It was a curious scene. How I wish Flo could have drawn the white painted wooden building in the forest, with the riding horses hitched to the trees, and the handsome black and white pigs rooting about, and the fenced-off graveyard just beyond, and the small Friendsville cottages scattered about, all white, and almost every one with its verandah. There were about one hundred and fifty persons at the meeting. . . . We dined at the William Forster Home for daughters of Friends to learn housekeeping and go to the Friends' school close by. At eight o'clock there was a Bible-reading at the school, which turned out to be a discussion on war, the schoolmaster, William Russell, arranging texts which were read by one person after another, and upon which he commented and invited comment. War, of course, got the worst of it, and there was an entire omission of any reference to their own war; so I tried to improve the occasion by exhorting them all to good treatment of the negro, as the way to avoid war for the future; not that these friends need exhortation, for they have done their duty under most difficult circumstances. You will imagine from what I have said that the situation of the graveyard is very beautiful. . . .

"This morning, friends gathered about me: An old man who remembered my father's first visit in 1823 or 1824, when he was a tall spare man, with his hair cut short, who used to bathe every morning. There was an old man, John Mackay, I went to see, very ill in bed, with his old sick wife by his side; 'Often I feel as though I could see the prints of his knees in that chair: I was a young man, a very ignorant man, but it seemed as though our hearts were drawn together.' . . . It is curious how I have found almost every possible trace of

my father very much by reason of the want of go-aheadness of the people. Low, for instance, had been born and raised in his house, his father, Abraham Low, being one of the first settlers, coming when it was an Indian country. Yesterday afternoon Yardley Warner discovered for me the negro who had been the waiting slave whilst he was ill, the decent middle-aged mother of seven children, four of whom now lived with her. Her story was an insight into the old system. She and her three children came with Mr. Low. She was called Maria Low, as was usual, after her master; married to a slave by name Henderson, not in church, but by the Squire. After emancipation, slaves usually had to marry again, but her husband married another woman and left her. Her eldest son was sold off, and disappeared just before the Yankees came down. However, now I should think she was doing fairly well, so I only gave her five dollars, and have asked Yardley Warner to look after her. Our meeting at the Normal Black School was very interesting. A hundred and fifty or so darkies—students, children, and parents. We were made to speak. I made rather a nice little speech about their changed state, the duties of patience, industry, and the like; and Fowell made a much nicer; and two of them, one the editor of the weekly paper, made pleasant replies. Almost every one of them had been either born a slave or since emancipation, and by far the largest number were ex-slaves, and many of them very black.”

A day or two later he met a Colonel Dickenson, Member for Congress and Chairman of the Congress Finance Committee. He was the first statesman who had broached the Canada question to him.

“Well, what do you think of the Canada problem?—in slow drawl, to which I with equal slowness—

“I do not know that Canada is a problem. Canada gives us no trouble; her people are well off and contented.”

“But what good does she do you?”

“Well, I do not know of any special good to any individual; but we do not look at it in that light. We consider Canada part of our country.”

“Ah, yes. You, like us, are a land-loving people.”

“No, we do not care about the land; it is the people. We consider the Canadians our fellow-countrymen. While they stick to us we shall stick to them; but if they wish to leave us we shall not restrain them, etc., etc.”

Forster concludes the notes of his visit to the scene of his

father's death, a visit which evidently made a very deep impression upon him, as follows :—

“ I have now seen James Rodgers, the doctor who was with my father at his death—a kindly man. He said he thought ill of the case from the first ; the illness pneumonia, mainly owing to the changes of temperature. ‘ He never saw a man die more triumphantly.’ He passed away without pain, conscious to the last. I am rather in a conflict talking to these old Confederates. I cannot help telling them what I think of slavery, and yet I cannot bear to triumph over them. I arrange my talk by telling them I must think their cause a bad one, but I admire their heroism and endurance, and we generally part the best of friends.”

After spending a few days in Richmond and Baltimore, where he carefully inspected the schools, he went straight through to Boston by way of New York. At Boston he was the guest of Mr. Adams.

“ Very kind and hospitable they are ; and Adams takes me behind the scenes of American politics more than any other man either can or would ; but I am very glad we went West and South before remaining in the Eastern States. We have with difficulty staved off a reception here. I am in for, I fear, one or two speeches at Philadelphia ; and on Saturday evening I had a telegram from Morton, one of the most influential merchants in New York, saying, ‘ Would it be agreeable to you to attend a reception, if given by the Union League Club in recognition of your distinguished service and friendship for the Government during the war ? ’ Of course I must make it agreeable ; and I cannot say I regret the request, but it sits heavy on me, as I long to be at Wharveside. Adams is slow and sedate as of old ; but he is as fresh and clear and vigorous as ever. I hear rumours of Massachusetts sending him as a senator, and I do not lose hope of his being President, but I fear his manner is too cold.”

In Boston, as in other places, the schools were the great attraction for Forster, and he took special notice of the religious teaching given in them, finding, however, that in America, as in England, the teachers have at times to contend with un-reasoning bigotry.

At Philadelphia he met his old correspondent and friend Ellis Yarnall, and was introduced to most of the celebrities of the place, as usual taking the opportunity of visiting the schools. Then came a number of visits to Washington, where he visited the Senate, and heard the President's message read, or rather fell asleep during the reading, which was almost inaudible.

“Both chambers are of the same pattern, long rooms, with semicircles of chairs in front of the Speaker or Vice-President, and galleries all round. House, of course, much larger than Senate; the floor accessible to strangers behind the chairs; and in the House strangers may sit in the outside chairs when the galleries are full. They must have effect upon the speakers; and, indeed, I have heard this fact much commented on and lamented. Fish gave us last evening a good dinner in handsome house. I took in his wife. No other lady. The party—Blaine, the Speaker; Jewell, the Postmaster-General; Bristow, the Secretary of the Treasury; Boutwell, his predecessor; Bierstadt, etc. We had amusing talk on the different ministerial systems, parliamentary forms, etc., Gladstone’s pamphlet, progress of the Papists, Government of the South, and so on. Here are two facts. There are more than fifty Confederate officers, some of them generals, in the two Houses, and no Catholic senator; and only one or two members of the House. Proofs of real union of the sections and of the nopenopy feeling.”

He called on Mr. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Confederates.

“A man of genius, as I expected; worn to skin and bone, weighing about eighty pounds, with crutches, but a pale, clear-cut face, with flashing eyes and pleasant expression. He tried to explain away his corner-stone speech. Said he was quoting from some of the chief justices; that their slavery was misunderstood, was not slavery; gave full protection to life and liberty to the slaves, and other such nonsense. There was no use contradicting the old man, so I only shrugged my shoulders and interjected dissent. We turned him on the oratory of Congress, and he gave us a vivid and most striking description of Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, and also Chouts, who he said was a great orator, but not a statesman; his definition of that individual being ‘a man who thinks originally on politics.’”

At Mr. Bancroft’s he again met President Grant, with whom he fraternized delightfully. “The Anglo-Saxon language, I had said, would soon be the language of the world. ‘We and England, indeed, would be the world.’ In fact, I could not have talked more Anglo-American alliance than he did. Canada turned up, and there was enough hint of annexation for me to say, ‘If Canada chooses one day to leave us, and the next day to join you, we shall not object; but she seems to like to stop with us; in fact, the lesson you taught us a hundred years ago has made us so treat our colonies that it

will be very difficult for them to leave us, and we shall stick to them till they wish to do so."

"I should think very ill of you if you did not," was his reply. There was a good-natured frankness about Grant, and an uncultured sense which I liked, and it was curious watching his remarkable lids and red eyes. We talked against slavery, and he evidently thought it honest to say he had slaves when the war broke out."

Before he left Washington he dined both with the Vice-President and the President, then went to New York in order to take ship for home. The reception given in his honour at the Union League Club was a striking event. There was a large attendance, including a number of leading citizens, and the president of the club, Mr. Joseph Choate, made a speech warmly eulogizing Forster's attitude towards the United States during the civil war, and the great part he had played in the establishment of a national system of education in England. Mr. Forster replied at considerable length, the burden of his speech being that upon which, alike in dark days and in bright, he had never been tired of dwelling—the unity in interests and in sympathies of the two great branches of the English people.

"This Union League Club," he said, in conclusion, "was formed, I am told, in dark hours of danger, to join together loyal Americans in support of your close union against the slave power. May it be the type and forerunner of another union league—of a close alliance between the United States and England and all English-speaking communities; of a friendship between our Governments, so that we together may influence the world by proving how great are the blessings of popular Government when individual self-control prevails among the people; for, depend upon it, neither you nor we would be able to promote liberty or protect the liberties of others, or even preserve our own liberties, if either of us allowed this individual self-control to fade from among us."

In his journal he says—

"I got through my meeting somehow on the Monday. The attendance was large. Almost all the New York notables; the best representative assembly that had been brought together for long. . . . I felt them to be a kind but also critical audience. They received me well and were kind throughout, but I was uncommon glad when I got through having said about what I intended, though not even at *my* best. But I never had a more difficult job. I brought out what I wished about the Colonies, which they took very well. After the

speech I was put into the middle of a room, and I had to shake hands with some hundreds of folk, every man being presented to me as though I were a president or general. Then supper in a large room below, and a few short speeches, and at last I got home to bed."

One day only remained for him on the American continent, and it was devoted almost entirely to the inspection of New York female schools. "I brought away one curious fact. Every girl has to learn French or German. The principal told me that before Sedan seven-eighths learned French, now seven-eighths learn German."

Sailing in the *Abyssinia*, he landed at Liverpool on December 26th, and, returning at once to Burley, was delighted to find all well at home.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LIBERAL PARTY—THE EASTERN QUESTION.

SCARCELY had Mr. Forster returned from America than he was involved in a controversy which was certainly not of his own provoking. In the middle of January, 1875, Mr. Gladstone, to the surprise of his friends, announced his determination to retire from the leadership of his party. The efforts privately made to induce him to reconsider his determination proved ineffectual, and it became clear that it would be necessary to fill his place as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and titular head of the Liberal party. By common consent Mr. Forster was named as one of the men best qualified to fill this great post, which at the time was generally regarded as the stepping-stone to the premiership. Various politicians of eminence were named as rival claimants to the honour, but before long the contest—not between the principals, but among their supporters in the country—resolved itself into one between the claims of Mr. Forster on the one hand, and those of Lord Hartington on the other. It would be an invidious task for a biographer to discuss the merits of the two candidates for such a post. Nor is it necessary now to do so. One thing, however, must be said. There would have been no question as to Mr. Forster's pre-eminent fitness for the leadership if it had not been for the unhappy differences with the Birmingham League on the education question. Even those who supported the candidature of Lord Hartington did so rather on the ground that his was the name which would divide the party least than on the plea that he had any positive claims to the position surpassing or equalling those of Mr. Forster.

The friends of both men pressed their claims stoutly, both in the press and in public, the weight of opinion being at the outset unquestionably in favour of Mr. Forster. There is no

doubt that he was gratified and touched by the enthusiasm with which he was supported in many different quarters. His ambition seemed to be on the point of being satisfied to the utmost; and it was impossible for a man of his warm temperament and vigorous individuality not to feel that there was now opened up to him a possibility of future usefulness and distinction, the realization of which any man, however able, might have coveted. Neither he nor Lord Hartington took any personal part in the controversy, both waiting with patience for the decision of the Liberal members of the House of Commons, with whom the choice lay. But if Forster's friends were enthusiastic in their support, his enemies were even more ardent in their hatred. The action of his old colleagues in the previous year, when they "threw him over" on the question of the 25th clause, had confirmed the League party in the entirely erroneous belief that Forster alone was responsible for the character of the Education Act, so far as the religious question was concerned. Ignoring the fact that upon all purely educational questions he was in much closer sympathy with them than almost any other member of the Government, they determined to take this opportunity of driving home the weapons with which they had assailed him in previous years, and of completing, so far as lay within their power, the ostracism to which they had doomed him. It is not pleasant to have to dwell, however briefly, upon the character of the attacks which, during the latter half of January, 1875, were made upon Forster. Perhaps the action which he felt most severely, and which was most generally condemned by fair-minded persons throughout the country, was that of the Radical section in his own constituency. The League party in Bradford was still smarting under the heavy defeat they had encountered in 1874, when they had combined for the purpose of excluding Forster from Parliament. They now summoned a meeting of their own friends and sympathizers, and, in the name of Bradford Liberalism, passed a resolution hostile to Mr. Forster's claim to the leadership. It was his reward for having carried the Education Act.

I have spoken of his natural ambition, and of the not less natural pleasure with which he witnessed the recognition of his great qualities as statesman and administrator, on the part of those who were best qualified to form a judgment on the point. But when he saw that, although success might be within his reach, he could only attain it at the cost of weakening the party to which he belonged, by driving his irreconcilable opponents into open antagonism to it, he did not

hesitate as to the course he would take. He saw his old friend, Lord Granville, with whom his relations were always specially cordial, and informed him of his determination not to allow his name to remain before the Liberal party in opposition to that of Lord Hartington. "I came away," he says in his diary, speaking of the interview, "with the leadership given up—not without a pang, but with full belief I had done the right thing." He subsequently wrote a letter to Mr. Adam, the Liberal whip, formally withdrawing from the contest. This step on his part must speak more eloquently than any words in reply to those who, during his lifetime, ventured to charge him with indifference to anything but his own interests in political affairs. It may be added that it was not merely by withdrawing his name from the competition that he showed his loyalty to his party and his principles. Lord Hartington was duly elected, no other name being proposed, as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. He held that post from February, 1875, until the end of the session of 1879, and during that period there was no man who was more conspicuously loyal and cordial in his support of his leadership than Mr. Forster was. When leaving the House of Commons for his usual continental tour, at the close of the session of 1875, he was thanked with special cordiality by Lord Hartington for the support which he had given the latter in his difficult task.

It happened that during the year colonial questions were forced to the front. South African affairs were beginning to cause anxiety, and those who believed that one essential feature of the Liberal programme ought to be the abandonment of our colonial empire to its fate, were raising their voices in various quarters. Forster's feeling with regard to our responsibility in respect of our colonies was probably stronger than that of any other public man of his time, and for this reason—that it had a double foundation. It was based, in the first place, upon that deep sympathy with the subject races of the world, which he had inherited from his father and his uncle, and which, as has already been said, was really the master-feeling in his heart all through his life. "— has never fully believed the negro to be a man and a brother," he wrote once to a friend, giving the statement as a sufficient reason for his not being able at all times to agree with the distinguished man of whom he spoke. Forster unquestionably *did* believe in the manhood and brotherhood, not merely of the negro, but of all the races that people our earth, whatever might be their state of dependence or degradation.

Fully possessed with this conviction, he never could feel that there was anything to distinguish the oppression of a yellow man or a black man from that of a white man. He had learned in his early youth something of the cruelties to which the native races are too often subjected when they are brought in contact with civilized settlers, and, so far as he was concerned, he was determined that he would never sanction in any way any act of oppression of which a negro or a Chinaman might be the victim, whatever might be the reasons of high policy alleged in defence of such an act. It was this feeling which gave him his keen interest in the affairs of South Africa, and of those other British colonies where the colonists have to deal with more or less dependent races of natives. The blacks had no votes. They had no caucus at their command, and not even a powerful organ in the press; but whilst Forster lived there was one voice at least which was certain to be raised in their defence in Parliament, however formidable might be the enemies against whom they had to contend.

The other foundation of his interest in the colonies was that feeling of imperialism—using the word in its best sense—which was so strong in him. He delighted in the thought of the greatness and the vastness of the British empire, and longed ardently for the moment when the widely scattered portions of that empire should be welded together in a bond so strong that no sudden or accidental shock would suffice to break it. The reader has seen how great an interest he took, during his journey in the United States, in the Canada question. He was constantly seeking to learn the views both of Canadians and Americans upon it, and was never tired of preaching the doctrine of the unity of the empire—a unity based, not upon military or naval force, nor even upon the material bonds of commerce, but upon the essential oneness of our race in whatever part of the world it may be found. Nothing made him more indignant than to listen to the light and cynical remarks of those who held that, after all, Great Britain and Ireland were quite enough of themselves to tax the governing capacity of our race, and that the sooner we “cut the painter” and let the Greater Britain drift from us the better it would be for Englishmen. . . Being invited, in the autumn of this year (1875), to deliver an address to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, he chose “Our Colonial Empire” as his theme, and one or two passages from the lecture may be quoted here.

“I believe that our union with our colonies will not be

severed, because I believe that we and they will more and more prize this union, and become convinced that it can only be preserved by looking forward to association on equal terms. In other words, I believe that our colonial empire will last, because, no longer striving to rule our colonies as dependencies when they become strong enough to be independent, we shall welcome them as our partners in a common and mighty empire. But, if this be all I have to say, why, I may be asked, come here at all? Who talks now of casting off the colonies? What more popular cry at present than the preservation of our colonial empire? Some twelve years ago, it is true, a voice from Oxford declared this empire to be an illusion for the future, a danger to the present; but Professor Goldwin Smith has gone to Canada, and his eloquent arguments for disruption have as little convinced the Canadians as ourselves. A most distinguished and successful Indian governor told us at Glasgow last year, that 'he was not one of those who believe in uniting the colonies to our country in a perpetual bond;' and he added that, so far as our great Canadian possessions were concerned, 'the sooner the connection was severed the better.' But Sir George Campbell had only just returned from India, and it is no disrespect to him to suppose that he was at that time a better judge of Indian than of British or colonial feeling. Some logicians and philosophers, some energetic and thoughtful politicians, have been supposed to desire ultimate separation; but, if they hold these opinions, of late they have but little expressed them; and, indeed, the supposition is based rather upon inferences which others chose to attribute to them than upon actual expressions. Certainly, the late Government was not seldom attacked as an anti-colonial Administration, but this charge is but another evidence of imperial feeling. It was known that no charge against a Government could be more damaging; and therefore, considering the conditions of party warfare, it was not unnatural for those who differed from us, both on matters of general policy and on details of colonial policy, to declare that we were wishing to get rid of the colonies or to provoke them to leave us. If I had come here to defend the Government of which I happened to be a member, which, of course, is not my object, I think I could show that our colonial policy has done not a little to improve and strengthen our connection with the colonies; but, at any rate, I may be allowed to disown in the strongest terms any intention or desire on our part to break it up. . . .

"As to the practical question, Are there any means by which it is possible that these future commonwealths, when

no longer dependent, can be united with us and with one another? I may hasten at once to try to answer this question; for if it can be answered, that argument will be also met which I have already mentioned—namely, that separation would stimulate the colonies to a greater progress, and would increase their self-reliance. Surely it cannot be denied that, if it be possible to replace dependence by association, each member of the federation would find in the common nationality at least as much scope for its aspirations, as much demand for the patriotism and the energy and the self-reliance of its citizens, as it would if trying to obtain a distinct nationality for itself. But is this federation possible? There are many, even of those who desire it, who think that it is not. . . .

“What kind of federation do you propose? My reply is, I am ready with no proposition. I believe any precise proposition would be premature, and for this reason, that as yet no change in relations is necessary. As Mr. Arthur Mills stated in the passage I have already quoted, ‘The present principle of our colonial policy is to ripen these communities to the earliest possible maturity,’ and when they have obtained this maturity it will be for us and for them to consider what, under the circumstances then existing, will be the best bond of union. All that is required now is to imbue them and ourselves with the desire that the union should last, with the determination that the empire shall not be broken up; to replace the idea of eventual independence, which means disunion, by that of association on equal terms, which means union. If this be done, we need not fear that at the fitting time this last idea will realize itself.”

Brief as the foregoing extracts are, they will give some idea of the state of Forster’s mind at that time—when as yet there was no organized movement in favour of imperial federation, and when he stood practically alone among statesmen of the front rank in advocating it. Later on, as we shall see by-and-by, his mind had grown and his views were both more advanced and more clearly defined than they appeared to be at Edinburgh. But his speech to the Philosophical Institution, on November 5, 1875, is specially interesting, as it really may be said to mark the beginning of a movement which has since attained such great proportions and which bids fair to lead to such substantial results. During his visit to Edinburgh, in which he was accompanied by Mrs. Forster, he received the freedom of the city, and was invited to stand for the post of Lord Rector of Aberdeen University, to which he was elected a few days later by a large majority.

A question which was certain to interest him greatly, occupied the public mind at the beginning of the year 1876. This was the issue of the so-called slave circular by the Admiralty—a circular which virtually gave up, in certain cases, the right of asylum for escaped slaves on board English men-of-war. It turned out in the end that a Liberal as well as a Tory minister had been concerned in issuing regulations to this effect; but the public, always readily moved by appeals to the traditional sympathies of Englishmen on questions affecting slavery, were loud in their denunciations of any step of a retrograde character which might be taken by the Government. Forster himself was full of indignation. It was resolved by the leaders of the Opposition to move a resolution on the subject as soon as possible after the meeting of Parliament, and Forster proposed that it should be one calling for the withdrawal of the obnoxious circular.

To his Wife.

“Reform Club, February 4th, 1876.

“MY DEAREST,

“To-day’s story is this; I contended with my papers as well as I could up to one, getting through long memoranda by Harcourt, Selborne, and James, and having a call from Adam. I then went to Hartington, and had talk with him and Whitbread. Whitbread will move the resolution, if he can agree with us on the form.

“Harcourt proposed a long resolution, too legal, and to the effect that we would not go into slave ports unless they would let us give refuge to their slaves. This is open to the fatal objection that there is nothing Zanzibar, Madagascar, and other slave-trading powers would like better than to keep us out of their ports. My resolution, however, was open to the objection that to require the withdrawal of the circular was to censure the Government. I then suggested that Whitbread should move for copies of their two circulars and our Admiralty order—thereby showing no party feeling by hitting all round—and add a resolution that no fugitive slaves should be restored to slavery. H. and W. and Cardwell, who came in, agreed to this.

“We then went on to Granville’s; all the old Cabinet present but Bright, Argyll, Selborne, and Childers. Gladstone there and active. . . . After much talk, the agreement was a simple resolution that fugitive slaves once received should not be restored to slavery, leaving it to Granville and Hartington

to allude to our order and ask for all papers, showing we are making no party attack.

"It turns out that Clarendon's second despatch is in the Slave Trade Blue-books of 1871 or 1872—bad for Stansfeld and me, but worse for the Anti-Slavery Society, who, being established to criticize Blue-books, never found this out. . . . Farewell, my dearest.

"Thine,

"W. E. F."

"Athenæum Club, Saturday.

"James called on me this morning, finding fault with our resolution, but giving some good reasons, in which Harcourt agreed. So I went on to Granville, who agreed to call another meeting on Monday with Selborne; and then went on to Hartington, where I found Harcourt and Adam. We harked back to my original proposition, improving the words, and putting the order alongside circular."

In the end the resolution was defeated by a majority of forty-five. "Slashing speech from Dizzy at the end—furious attack on me," notes Forster in his diary. There was no doubt that the Tory Prime Minister was very angry at the detection of what was rather a piece of maladroitness on the part of one of his colleagues than any serious offence against English ideas on the question of slavery.

The Imperial Titles Bill was another question which aroused fierce excitement at the time—an excitement which has scarcely been justified by the consequences of the measure, now that it has been passed. It would hardly be worth alluding to Forster's part in the debates upon it, but for one circumstance. Whilst he objected altogether to a departure from the old style, under which the English empire had been built up, he was particularly anxious that, if such an alteration were made to suit the ideas of men of the Disraelian type, it should not affect India alone, but should embrace all the outlying portions of the empire; and he suggested to the representatives of the colonies that they should claim their inclusion in any new title which might be assumed by the Crown with the sanction of Parliament.

Of the other political questions of 1876 in which he took part there is little that need be said, except with reference to that great problem of European policy which was now re-appearing above the surface in the East. There were debates in Parliament on the education question in which he naturally

took part. In one of these debates he notes with satisfaction the handsome manner in which Mr. Bright had spoken of the Act of 1870 and of himself. The Vivisection Bill, too, engaged a good deal of his time and attention, and he congratulated himself in his diary upon having got the House to "put the frogs back" under the protection of the measure, the Home Secretary having agreed to exclude them. There is one extract which may be made from his diary, because it refers to an incident in the life of the House of Commons which at the time caused some excitement.

"June 30th, 1876.—Home Rule debate. Heard a very plausible opening speech by Butt. Smyth got up as a Repealer to oppose, and I went away, remembering him as dull. I heard, afterwards, I had missed one of the best speeches ever made in the House; acknowledged to be such by Dizzy and Bright; very vexing. I should have liked to have heard what this House considers a good speech. Much was owing to the felicity of the occasion—a Repealer knocking over a Home Ruler. . . . I called on Gladstone at 11.30 to talk over Eastern affairs, and especially the amount of our obligation under the 1856 Treaties. . . . G. quoted with approval what he said was a statement by Lord P[almerston], that a guarantee did not give the guaranteed a right to demand help; only gave the guarantors a *casus belli* if they chose to use it."

The latter portion of the foregoing extract introduces us to the condition of affairs in foreign politics which prevailed in 1876. In that same month of June the English public had been shocked by the publication, in the *Daily News*, of some letters from the correspondent of that journal at Constantinople, describing the atrocious cruelties which had been inflicted upon the inhabitants of certain villages in Bulgaria and Roumelia by the Turkish troops—chiefly irregulars recruited in Asia Minor—on the pretext of putting down a suspected insurrectionary movement. Lady Strangford, as soon as the *Daily News* account appeared, wrote to Mr. Forster confirming the statement. He went to see her, and found her "in much quandary, between her love of the Bulgarians, of whom she says she is the only friend, and her love of the Turks. I told her she ought to send the facts to Dizzy, and she said she would."

This was on June 25th. On the following day, English feeling on the subject first found voice in the House of Commons in a question which Forster addressed to Mr. Disraeli, regarding the truth of the newspaper reports. The Prime Minister gave him in reply "as near a denial as he

dared." The session closed, leaving the public in a state of great uncertainty and excitement regarding the actual state of things in the East. It had been known for some time that great events were brewing there, and that Russia was about to make another step forward in her advance towards Constantinople. The traditional feeling and policy of this country were all on the side of Turkey, and against the pretensions of our old antagonist of the Crimean days. But even those who had the greatest dread of Muscovite aggressions could not listen unmoved to such a tale of horror as that which had reached us from the Turkish provinces. Men who had, up to that moment, been Philo-Turks all their lives, now shrank in disgust from the idea that we might be associated with a State under the authority of which the nameless atrocities of Batak and Tatar-Bazardjik could be perpetrated with impunity. Mr. Disraeli—who at this critical moment terminated his brilliant career in the House of Commons by the acceptance of an earldom—was anxious that the hideous stories from Bulgaria should be disproved, and perhaps allowed his feeling of the importance of maintaining our traditional policy in the East to influence his mind in its acceptance or rejection of the newspaper intelligence on the subject. Mr. Gladstone took a different line. His retirement from public affairs, which began in 1875, had been tolerably complete during that year. In the beginning of 1876, however, he again was found taking an active part in settling the policy of the Opposition on the question of the slave circulars. When the news of the outrages committed by the Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria reached England, he cast off completely any affectation of retirement from active life, and, feeling that a great cause demanded his assistance, threw himself into the work of inflaming the public indignation against the authors of the murders and atrocities at Batak and Tatar-Bazardjik, with an energy which was almost phenomenal. During the latter part of August and the whole of September, 1876, the country was thrilled from one end to the other by the passionate appeals which Mr. Gladstone made to it against the conduct of those who seemed bent upon maintaining an active alliance between England and the men who were responsible for these abominable offences. By his famous pamphlet, and his speeches full of a passionate eloquence, he succeeded, in a few weeks, in reversing, for the moment, at all events, the current of the national sympathy and policy. Mr. Forster had no part in that brilliant and remarkable crusade of September, 1876—a month notable in the history of our country. On August 15th, he left London on a journey to the

east of Europe, his object being to see something on the spot of the conditions of the great problem which was now demanding the attention of statesmen.

His companion on this occasion was his elder daughter, now Mrs. R. V. O'Brien; and, in writing of the tour, she says, "Of all my many journeys with my father, I think that one in 1876 was the most delightful and memorable; and that is saying a great deal, for going abroad with him, as I did nearly every year from the time I was fourteen, was always felicity to me, as well it might be. He enjoyed everything in travelling, and took an interest in everything—in seeing a new country, in genuine hard walking and climbing when he was amongst his beloved mountains, in reviving his curiously varied and often out-of-the-way historical knowledge when he was wandering among the old French chateaux on the Loire, or in the Parliament House at Stockholm, or in Moscow, among the memorials of the Russian Czars, whose strange picturesque histories had always a special fascination for him. We never seemed able to go to any remote corner of Europe that was quite a *terra incognita* to him, or about which he did not at any rate know enough to make him take a keen interest in knowing and seeing more. For this reason sight-seeing was with him no mere form or drudgery. In fact, Oakeley and I, I am afraid, used sometimes rather to quail at the thoroughness of his explorations, and to wish in our hearts, after we had performed our first duty in a strange town, namely, going to the top of the highest tower or spire available, that the Sacristan of the Cathedral might be out, so that we should be spared our second duty—a thorough examination of all the old tombs and monuments inside. My father had a great love for old family records, and a wonderful faculty for making out and remembering the most complicated genealogies and pedigrees. For this reason he delighted in old monuments and family portraits, whether in public or private collections. In fact, I used often to notice, not only on our travels, but when staying with him at country houses, that he seemed to be more familiar with the family pedigree, and to know more about the originals of the old portraits, than our host himself.

"Another thing that made journeys with him so interesting and delightful was his enjoyment of the social side of our adventures. In addition to the friends made through his regular introductions (these often various enough) he used to make acquaintances everywhere—in trains, on long steamboat journeys, over a game of chess or whist at inns sometimes, in the oddest and most un-British circles. He seemed able, from

his sympathetic and humorous appreciation of men and things, to be quickly at home, and to get on to the most friendly terms with people whose society many English travellers would have avoided on the simple ground of not being familiar with their language, if on no other. I have vivid recollections of one lively evening at a small inn on the Polish side of the Carpathians, where we found ourselves (as was often the case) the only English-speaking people at the *table d'hôte*, but, so far from being isolated, were so warmly adopted into the general circle that, after we had at last retreated from the sociable hubbub of the *table d'hôte* room to the quiet of our own rooms, a deputation of our kind friends followed us upstairs to induce us to continue the acquaintance. It was a never-ceasing cause of regret to my father that he was not more familiar with French and German, in the way of a speaking knowledge, I mean, in addition to a reading one. But in spite of this great difficulty, it was astonishing how much valuable information he used to gather from his miscellaneous travelling acquaintances from sheer force of interest in their national or local affairs, and from a perfectly clear knowledge in his own mind of the particular facts that he 'wanted to get at,' as he used to say. And in addition to this power of collecting special items of information or opinions from miscellaneous individuals, his general knowledge of the political situation in the different countries, and his masterly power of discounting the prejudices and inclinations of his interlocutor, always enabled him to set the right value on their information, and prevented him from being imposed upon.

"With all his sympathy for the man he was talking to at the moment, he never seemed to forget that there might be another side to the question, and so, often, when we were talking things over afterwards, and I was impressed with nothing but what I had last heard, he would say, 'But we must remember——' and then remind us of another aspect and set of facts which I had quite left out of account. To assist at his conversation with all our various travelling acquaintances, whether passively, or, as sometimes happened, as an amateur interpreter, was quite an education. His questions always seemed to take one straight into the heart of the subject, and his zeal to get information naturally produced a corresponding eagerness on the part of our friends to give it. All sorts of questions, political, military, social, and financial, used to come into our travelling talk; it might be with an enthusiastic Czech professor at Prague, or with a cultivated Austrian merchant returning to his home in the Bukowina, or

a gentlemanly whist-playing Pole at some German watering-place, or with a party of Russian volunteers going to help the Servians, or a Hungarian Honved officer, or a Government official in a Roumanian railway carriage, or a shrewd English man of business in the fair at Nijni Novgorod, or some high diplomatic magnate at Constantinople or Vienna, or an active politician and deputy at Berlin, Pesth, or Athens—wherever or with whomsoever it might be, my father seemed always to have the faculty of getting straight on to some topic that thoroughly interested both himself and the man he was talking to, if it was only for a five minutes' conversation.

“There was only one of his social adventures abroad of which he used to say laughingly afterwards that it had landed him in a false position. This was on our first afternoon in Moscow, when, thanks to a promptly honoured letter of introduction, he found himself at the private view at the horse-show at the great National Exhibition then being held, installed beside the General-Governor and a brilliant circle who had come to take part in the judging and awarding of prizes before the admission of the public. My father used to say that he felt keenly how much intelligent criticism and appreciation might have been expected from him on this occasion, not only as an Englishman, but a Yorkshireman, whereas his admiration of the splendid black Orloff trotters, the wild-looking Crimean horses, and the bull-necked Finland ponies, who were paraded in solemn procession before us, could be only of the most unenlightened though cordial description.”

I have given this description of Forster, not merely as a tourist, but as a traveller, from the pen of one who was so frequently his companion, at this particular point in my narrative, not merely because of its general interest as a contribution towards the complete portrayal of his character, but because it shows with what care and thoroughness, even upon these holiday journeys of his, he sought to inform his mind. The journey of 1876 was undertaken in a great degree for a political purpose. He did not go merely to enjoy the fine scenery of the Carpathians and the Danube, but in order that he might, as an English politician, learn something by actual observation of the state of things among those Eastern nationalities in whose condition England has long taken so deep an interest. The course of his journey cannot be followed closely without unduly adding to the length of this work, but some of the more interesting passages from his letters demand transcription. At Brussels he was invited to dine with the King: “I walked to the palace punctually at seven, and found

a large party already assembled. Making my way through crowds of flunkeys, the Grand Chamberlain introduced me to Lumley, our minister, upon whom I had called, not, however, finding him in. He told me I was to take in the king's daughter, the Princess of Saxe, just come back to her old home with her husband. Soon afterwards the royal party came in—the Christians with them—the King leading the Princess Christian, and Prince Christian the Queen. The King shook me most cordially by the hand, and introduced me to his daughter. I gave her my arm in fear and trembling, but she soon reassured me by an excellent English accent. . . . In the salon I had much talk with the King about the Congo. I pressed upon him three resolutions for his conference—pressure upon Spain and Portugal, pressure upon the Khedive and other Eastern (slave) buyers, and watchfulness against coolie and South Sea traffic. He thinks of establishing stations on the east coast, not as King, but as private philanthropist, and said he hoped Belgium would be of use. He would give the society a house at Brussels, etc. I could not help telling him about my father, and how rejoiced he would have been. He said he should write to me after the conference, but hoped he might do so in French. We had some other talk, a little about the war, and I said I wished his country and Holland were together, so as to be a better match for their great neighbours.”

Travelling to Prague and Cracow, he went across the mountains to the Hungarian town of Schmöcks.

“Schmöcks, Hungary, September 2nd, 1876.

“In my letter this morning I did not reply to ——’s inquiries about meetings to protest against the Bulgarian massacres. It is difficult to form an opinion away from England, but I cannot but think meetings will do good. There is no fear of our being hurried into war against Turkey, and every manifestation of feeling which prevents our Government backing up Turkey, and which will show other nations that we do not mean to back her up, will, I think, do good. I trust, however, that all meetings will end in practical aid to the Bulgarians. Remember that aid to the wounded does not mean help to the Bulgarians, and now that our Government is giving aid to the wounded, I cannot but think that the Bulgarian claim is by far the strongest, and I expect much incidental good from British distribution.”

The war between the Turks and Servians was then being waged, and at Buda-Pesth, where Forster made the acquaint-

ance of many friends, and where he had pleasant experience of the popularity which is still enjoyed by the travelling Englishman among the Hungarians, the air was full of news from the battle-fields. He spent his time as usual in acquiring all the information he could regarding the political situation, and his letters are full of interesting comments upon Austro-Hungarian politics and of anecdotes, chiefly gathered from Professor Pulszky, of the Emperor and his concession of a constitution to the Hungarians. After a brief stay at Pesth, he and his daughter went down the Danube to Belgrade, and from thence, by way of Giurgevo to Bucharest.

To his Wife.

“ Grand Hotel, Brofft, Bucharest,
“ September 12th, 1876.

“ MY DEAREST WIFE,

“ We have seen one church, driven through the town, got our money at our bankers, and called on our Consul, Colonel Mansfield, who has kindly asked us to dinner at seven. I have had my *bain russe*, and now I may settle in for two hours' quiet writing, which from my last note at Semlin (opposite Belgrade) till now has been impossible. It has been almost the most interesting, not to say exciting, journey I have ever had, and in its immediate surroundings most pleasurable, though painful, indeed, in what I have been forced to hear. I have managed, however, to protect Flo very much from the painful details of the war. . . . But now for my doings. I finished my last note just before arriving at Semlin on Friday morning. We were welcomed there by a Hungarian official, and by a message from a lieutenant in command of one of the iron monitors, which were anchored off Semlin to keep the Servians in order, to ask us to pay them a visit. This we did, finding everything very clean and ship-shape, and then sallied out for Belgrade in a new boat, put at our disposal by Pulszky's friends. 'We' were Pulszky, Gastrell the Consul, Heron (M.P.), and selves. Semlin and Belgrade, to my surprise, are both on the right bank of the Danube, but a wide creek of the Danube and the Save between them. The row was about three-quarters of an hour. Belgrade, with its hilly promontory, crowned with its fortress and flanked by its churches, with its wooded hills in the background, and with the mighty Danube around it, was a rememberable sight. Going up the steps at Belgrade, we met White the Consul, and Colonel Mure, the M.P. It turned out I knew

White; had seen him as Dantzie Consul when I was in office on the cattle plague—a tall, stout, most cordial, cheery Scotchman; and Colonel Mure welcomed me with the statement, ‘I have written a letter, fourteen pages long, which I was going to send to you, when in comes White, and says, “Have you sent your letter to Mr. F. by the English post? If not, you had better wait, as he will be here in a quarter of an hour.”’ So now I was in the midst of the war news and war questions. Mure had been here two or three weeks, and had become intensely Servian and anti-Turk. Lindsay, on the contrary, who had returned from his journey to the front, and whom we saw at White’s in the evening, was much more possessed with indignation against the Servian ministers and war party for driving the poor peasants into battle, and with the Russians for keeping up the war by their large batches of volunteers, constantly arriving. . . . At seven we met for dinner at Mure’s hotel; very slowly served by drunken waiters, demoralized by the war, and no wonder; and about nine went to the consul’s. . . . Sandwith was there. He wanted me to go to the front with him, and I was sadly tempted; but Flo and time prevented. Prince Wrede was also anti-Turk, as was natural, and gave me a clever diplomatic hit. ‘The war would quickly end, were it not for the Russian volunteers, and the support of European opinion.’ Ristich the minister said much the same thing to me the next day; but then this was also his cue. However, I was very careful to take always the line that the Servians had done enough, and could gain nothing by continuing the war. About ten we left for our return to Semlin, our boatmen having waited for us. As White’s servant guided us to the boat there were gusts of wind and blinding dust, and sheet-lightning in the horizon; but no one seemed to question the safety of our return, and as soon as we could get off, the boatmen began to pull us across the Save. The fierce current curled in short snapping waves; the wind somewhat lulled, but at any time a blast possible, and it came in a hailstorm and with a vengeance, but fortunately only a few steps from the island, which is, in fact, the left bank of the Save. The men ran us ashore as quickly as possible, and I know not when I have been more glad than I was to get out in the mud, though in that pelting rain. We made for a block-house—three or four open arches under a chamber to which there was no ladder—where we strove to hide ourselves from the storm for half an hour or more, stumbling over some dark objects, which seemed to be logs of wood, but turned out to be soldiers, who, however, took our unintentional kicks

with absolute apathy, not even grunting or rising all the time we were there. At length the storm abated; but the men did not venture to row across the creek, towing us all around it instead, so it was past midnight before we reached our Semlin inn, the inmates of which we had to wake up. . . . About ten I was back again at Belgrade, the morning fine, and the river looking innocent enough, and White on the bank, much relieved to meet us, for his man had told him of the storm. He took me and Heron at once to call on Ristich, with the understanding that I was to be left alone with the minister. He seemed an able man, but with a mask-like face, which did not remove distrust. He may, however, have acquired his fixed expression in his previous occupation, which was—what do you think?—that of a public orator at funerals. I was with him, I should think, an hour. He got out a map and showed me the exact position, past and present, of the army; seemed to me really desirous of peace, quite ready to admit that Servia could gain nothing by the continuance of war, as, after her defeat, she could not get her object, which is Bosnia. '*Nous avons fait une grande illusion,*' he said. They expected a rising in Bulgaria, but the Turks have stamped that out, and, indeed, their cruelties and terrorism have answered their purpose, both there and against the army; for the fear of the Servian peasant soldiers is not merely fear of battle, but fear of the special Turkish horrors. He gave me a copy of the circular which he had just sent to the different consuls, respecting recent atrocities, and which I see mentioned in the *Times*, but he did not pretend to say that mere sympathy with the Bosnians had made them fight, rather than the fear of a revolution, the exceeding difficulty of their situation, and the expectation that they would get more help from the provinces, and that Greece would attack Turkey, and, above all, that Turkey itself would not prove so strong. He had a long talk with —, who saw him after me, and to him expressed much distrust of Tchermaieff and the Russians, declaring that their original programme had been to attack on the side of Bosnia, getting Nikita to meet them; but that T. had made them change their front and attack Bulgaria, where there was no response. To me he declared, most positively, that though they expected assistance from the provinces, they did absolutely nothing to provoke insurrection, and he tried to give me the impression that they were very anxious to owe Russia as little as possible. . . . We all collected at one, at White's, to a capital luncheon, after which I went with Lindsay to call on Miss Johnston's five nurses, who are having a special

hospital, an old school, fitted up for them. They were learning Servian in a quiet hotel. . . . Two of them, without doubt, ladies. A very doubtful adventure, I think, surrounded by the pick of the adventurers, not to say cutthroats, of Europe. Their dress seems to me most foolish—that of a maid-servant; not a dress that demands respect—not to be compared with the religious habit of the Catholic sister. That morning we had come upon a notable specimen of the modern Dugald Dalgetty, a Spanish Carlist captain; a handsome fellow, but looking capable of any atrocity, disgusted with the Servian outlook (Tchernaiëff evidently wishes for no volunteers but Russians), and intending to make off to Widdin to offer himself to the Turks, though declaring that two thousand resolute European soldiers, well led, could march where they pleased, spite of both armies. We returned by steamer about five, after walking round the old fortress and seeing the glorious view, and then waited at Semlin till past eleven, supping, Flo writing, and we four playing whist. The steamer was crowded with Russians, but many of them really Red Cross men, an ambulance from Kazan. I reposed till Basiasch, where, to my inexpressible comfort, I received thy note of Monday the 4th, also the *Leeds Mercury*. Okel had sent it from Vienna to the Poste Restante, and White had telegraphed to the postmaster to bring it on board. At Semendria, the head of the Morava Valley, two or three English surgeons had joined us, intending to go with Lindsay, who, as well as Mure, was in our boat, to Widdin for help to the Turkish wounded, having set the Servian help going. The head of the party was MacCormack, a tall, handsome, most prepossessing man, from St. Thomas's, who had ridden hard from Deligrad, Tchernaiëff's head-quarters. He had been in the Franco-Prussian war, but said he had no experience of horrors to be compared to this. It is, in fact, a new idea, I expect, to both sides, to have to look after their wounded; though what hospitals the Turks have are, I hear, clean and well managed."

On his way to Bucharest, and whilst staying in the Roumanian capital, Forster met with several men concerned in the Bulgarian movement against Turkish rule, as well as with Mr. Christich, a Servian ex-minister and brother-in-law of Mr. Ristich. Some of the Bulgarian refugees had heard of him in connection with the question he had asked in the House on the subject of the Turkish atrocities, and they were eager to tell him their own special tales of suffering and outrage. He took careful notes of each individual case, for the

purpose of giving the information to Sir Henry Elliot when he saw him at Constantinople. On September 15th, they reached Constantinople, and he took up his quarters at Misseri's Hotel.

To his Wife.

“Constantinople, September 17th, 1876.

“I must leave Flo to describe the sights of this city, which is beautiful as ever, very squalid and savage, though somewhat less so, I think, than when I was here before.

“I was much vexed to see that paragraph in the *Daily News*, and, of course, it has not made my visit easier; but I cannot say my conscience rebukes me for coming here. I get information on the question of the day, most concerning the present duty of England, such as no reading could possibly give me.

“My day's work has been equal to the worst of the House, and, though tired enough, I must make sure of some of the things I have heard. Leaving Robert College yesterday afternoon, a man in Turkish uniform got into our tram carriage; he made known his nationality by the special English expletive, and then, turning to Mure, said it was for a Turk, not him. He turned out to be a Dr. T——, lately appointed private physician to the Sultan, and his report of him was very much in accordance with Gallenga's (the *Times* correspondent) account of him to me to-day—that he had much intelligence, great want of knowledge, some force of character, and much determination to really govern. At present he is anxious to be told the truth; by help of a dictionary spells out French leaders against himself, and has the English newspapers translated. T—— said he had sent him in the last *Punch* with the picture of the Turk with the bloody hands. He sends him generally translations of the *Daily News* and *Spectator* as well as the *Times*.

“Soon after our return to the hotel, arrived a young Bulgarian from the college with a letter from Long, showing that the Exarch would be glad to see us, but at his private house and not at the Exarchate. So Mure and I descended the steep steps and took one of the wretched, small carriages to Ortakeui, three-quarters of an hour off on the Bosphorus—stifling work for three men in a small, shut-up brougham. His Beatitude lives in a small wooden house, most simply furnished—a man about sixty, with large pleasing eyes, a pleasant, but not powerful, countenance, with a long black gown and high black

cap. He was appointed, about three years ago, the first Exarch of the Bulgarian Church—now it is freed from Greek control—and was evidently a moderate, safe man, not a little desiring to keep himself safe. Every now and then he almost broke down with sobs; he confirmed the terrible stories, but we did not enter into details. I asked him as regards the future whether a Turkish Government would not be safe, with commissioners of the Powers to prevent injustice. Clearly he did not believe in this. ‘There are,’ he said, ‘the consuls now.’ The chief point he dwelt upon, and indeed reiterated, was that if Bulgaria was left as it was its future condition would be worse than before these events, bad as was that.

“At the *table d’hôte* there was a man reminding me much of C——, only taller and better-looking. He introduced himself to me, and turned out to be Guercino, the Levantine father-in-law of Baring. His chief object was to defend himself against the newspaper attacks; to say how he had opposed the Turks when consul in Asia, and to explain that he had not wished, but was pressed, to go on the Commission. He inveighed against exaggeration, but admitted that, though some of the *Daily News* stories were untrue or overstated, there were others quite as bad, so that the general result was not an exaggeration.

“By-the-by, the Exarch told us that he had not seen Sir H. Elliot, but he had feared to see him or any of the other ambassadors, and he was comforted by our assurance that we would tell nobody in Constantinople that we had seen him, and would not publicly state it in England. Our young Bulgarian interpreter told us the story of the recent emancipation of the Bulgarian Church, and described the former Greek bishops as worse oppressors than the Turks.

“Now, then, for to-day’s history. We were off by the 8.45 boat for Buyukderé, above Therapia. Upon the boat was Guercino. He wanted me to see the Grand Vizier, but I did not jump at this. There can be no doubt that the Turks are now seriously alarmed about the effect of the atrocities. He told me that the Sultan himself took it much to heart. A fresh commission of four Mussulmans and four Christians starts to-morrow to examine and try. But it is thought that a trial in the provinces will be a sham, to get off the worst criminals, who are well connected here. One of the worst is a relative of Abdul Kerim, the commander-in-chief, who comes himself from a Bulgarian village. Guercino, however, did introduce us to one man well worth seeing, Aziz Pacha, who happened to be on board the steamer, and was the Governor of Philip-

popolis at the beginning of the insurrection, and was refused by Mahmoud Pacha (Abdul Aziz's Grand Vizier) the few regular troops with which he said he could have put it down. Panateroff had given me a good account of him when he was in London, and he certainly talked as fair as man could. He said the worst atrocities were committed by the armed Turks of the Bulgarian villages, not by the Circassians (which, indeed, every one says—the Circassians only rob), and he says that what he did in 1867 ought to have been done now—an armed police ought to have been raised of Mussulmans and Christians. He, however, is himself a Slav, in fact a Bosnian Bey, and was Governor of Belgrade during the Crimean war. He went so far as to suggest autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also for Bulgaria, divided into three or four parts, so as to include the Bulgarian population of Thrace and Macedonia. He seemed to consider the Mussulmans about one-third of the population. This suggestion he made at his second interview. Upon the steamer he was surprisingly frank; put himself, as he said, 'in the hands of the English gentleman;' and, poor man, said he intended to come to England to thank the British Parliament for having spoken well of him.

"At Buyukderé we found Schuyler, and had full talk with him, after and during our *déjeuner*; a shrewd, clear-headed Yankee, giving a very connected account of his doings. The chief thing of importance I got from him was the extent to which the regular troops were implicated, and the market the officials had made by getting money from prisoners. I said, 'There are two questions: What ought to be done? and what can be done?' As regards the immediate future he is clear, and so is Long, that the Mussulmans must be disarmed. Remember, the Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria are merely the Mussulmans in the villages; some of the worst of them, the Pomaks, a clan of renegade Bulgarians. Without this, Long much fears fresh massacres this coming Ramasan, which begins this week.

"We then returned to Therapia. I had just introduced myself to Gallenga at the hotel, when Mure took me off to our Pasha, who wished to see us again. Meantime he had called at the Embassy, and, I suppose, had heard who I was, and now dubbed me *Eccellenza*. The only private room we could find for our confab was a small, secluded bedroom; in fact, we are bursting with 'deadly's,' for everybody wishes nobody to know that he has been seen.

"I then went down for a chat with Gallenga. He said he believed there was a practical armistice, the Servians being

unable to fight, and the Turks being told not to push forward, Russia holding off from the other powers; but he does not give credit to the fiendish Machiavellian policy ascribed to Ignatieff. He said that England and Russia ought to come to terms, that then the Turk would be powerless, and that at any rate we ought to risk the much-talked-of Turkish massacre, in which, however, he did not believe. . . . After Gallenga, I called upon Whitaker of the *Levant Herald*, a clever fellow, a friend of Lady Strangford's, but now backing up the Turks through thick and thin. It would not have done not to have seen him, but I civilly gave him my mind. This had brought us to past two, and, after a short talk with Baring, we took steamer for the station under the college. Mr. Long was intending to have taken us to the Bishop of Philippopolis, but when we got near his house, above Ortakeui, a Bulgarian was lying in wait for us with much mystery, who turned out to be the bishop's brother, put there to warn us off, on account of the new commissioners being in the house."

In the remaining portion of this letter Forster discussed with his usual frankness and vigour the charges which had been made against Sir Henry Elliot in connection with the massacres in Bulgaria—charges of indifference and neglect,—and explained how it had come to pass that the first news of the outrages had appeared in the *Daily News* and not in the *Times*, to which the intelligence had originally been sent. It is only necessary to say, regarding this part of his investigations whilst in Constantinople, that he worked as though he had been on a Parliamentary committee at home, seeking out persons capable of giving him information in every quarter, and subjecting them to an examination of uncompromising severity. Before he left Constantinople he had an interview with Said Pasha, then high in the favour of the Sultan.

To his Wife.

"Constantinople, September 19th, 1876.

"A carriage and cavass came for us at 9.30, to take us to the Sultan's Bosphorus palace, where, indeed, he is living, and where our Pasha, who is Deputy-Chamberlain, had rooms. . . . We were ushered into a room where we found Said Pasha, a tall fat Turk, curled up on a sofa, and two Englishmen unknown to me, one of whom turned out to be a Scudamore. The Pasha spoke English well—brought up at Woolwich and Edinburgh. He was a thorough gentleman, and got well over a little *contre-temps*. Our introducers, Sir George Thomas

and Mr. Smyth of the Ottoman Bank, had not turned up, and I do not think he at first knew who we were. . . . I said how glad I was to hear of a suspension of hostilities (in Servia). 'It might only be a patch-up,' he said. 'Russia was always intriguing to cause insurrections.' 'May I venture to tell your Excellency how we, in England, think you might defeat any intrigue by Russia? and that is, by giving the provinces such a Government as would take away the desire for insurrection.' My first shot, which brought us well into action, and our two Englishmen soon turned up. He complained much of Gladstone's pamphlet, and the manner in which he had spoken of the Turks. I could reply I had not read his pamphlet—only his speech, which did not contain such invective. He gave me his story of the Bulgarian business. He then drew a black picture of the Government system. The head of each department was a Sultan himself—absolute and uncontrolled. They were now aiming at responsible ministers. 'Without doubt,' I said, 'this must be necessary for good government; without it the country must be hopeless and the Sultan helpless.' I then took up my parable. 'Your Excellency is doubtless aware that I have no official position. Colonel Mure and myself belong to what we call the Opposition, though I trust this matter will not be made a party question. But would you like to have my opinion for whatever it is worth, of the grounds for the feeling now expressed by my countrymen?' Of course he wished me to be frank, in a very gentlemanly and apparently sincere manner. 'There was real reluctance in the British people to think ill of their old ally; but though I wanted not to enter into the details of the Bulgarian business, the admitted general result had excited very strong feeling. There were, however, three things which, if done by the Turkish Government, would, I think, convince our people that they were doing what they could to meet the immediate necessities. First, real compensation to the sufferers: to those who had lost their husbands and fathers and mothers and daughters; to the thousand who, I was told, were left out of the four thousand at Batak' (at this he showed neither anger nor surprise), 'and to those whose property had been unjustly taken from them. Next, the punishment which I was glad to hear from his Excellency would be inflicted upon the chief instigators of the excesses, however high their station, and so that the public would know that they were punished; and, lastly, the disarmament of the Bashi-Bazouks.' 'This was difficult,' he said; 'because they were now under command'—meaning, I suppose, en-

rolled. This disarmament is the great difficulty of the Government. For it they have not strength; but without it outrages are certain. Soon after, he fired back at me. 'We must make allowance for the feeling of the friends of those who were murdered. We had had our Indian mutiny. He was in England at the time, and had seen ladies grind their teeth in talking of revenge.' 'Your Excellency,' I said, 'is so good an Englishman that you will know our proverb. I will not enter into comparisons of blackness; but two blacks do not make a white.' We all laughed, and were very amicable. . . . He then talked about reforms—the earnestness of the Sultan to effect them. He had even said he would give up his rights if it were for the good of his country. 'You must help us,' he said. 'We want to get some constitutional government, though we are not yet fit for yours.' I expressed sympathy, which I am sure I felt, with their difficulties, and for the Sultan, and this enabled me to touch a little on the most difficult question of autonomy. 'Good government of the Turks' (which he had said was very much wanted), 'and a constitution for them, would be merely the Athenian surrounded by Helots, unless given also to the Christians. We feared in England there must be autonomy, unless the Christians were admitted to perfect social equality and to the army.' He was quite ready for that. . . . We parted quite affectionately. He is one of the multitude who are to come and see us in London. The interview had some little possible importance, as at present Said is in the Sultan's good graces, and may repeat the talk to him. . . .

"*Wednesday, 10 p.m.*—Just arrived from Count Zichy's, the Austrian ambassador's. Poor Flo must put down something before we go to bed. The Austrian is the only ambassador at Pera during the summer, and he lives at the foot of a ladder of stairs, so Flo went in a sedan chair, and was carried into a hall, where crowds of soldier flunkeys helped her out. To my surprise, no madame; eight or nine men, mainly attachés, but Count Corti, the Italian minister. To my horror, Count Zichy addressed me in French. 'Je parle Français très mal,' said I. 'C'est la faute de mon éducation que je ne parle pas l'Anglais,' said the Hungarian magnate. But on the other side of me there was a young Austrian baron, who spoke English and remembered meeting you at Lady Waldegrave's. Our talk was very interesting. The count apologized for not calling to-day. He had had 'occupations très graves.' Hostilities were only suspended till next Tuesday, but 'there is nothing to fear;

there will be many suspensions for ten days.' Both the ambassadors were very anti-Turk. I expected this from the Italian, but not from the Austrian. The last told us that the Governor of Adrianople had been dismissed—'parce qu'il n'avait pas enterré les cadavres, et détruit les evidences.' And Count Corti told me a tremendous fact—that the present Grand Vizier, at the very beginning of the Bulgarian business, had told him how he would put down the insurrection, and had described 'la système par terreur'—precisely what I said in my speech. Both of them laughed at the supposed machinations of Ignatieff. He was not responsible for the non-employment of the regulars when Aziz Pasha demanded them; he had merely said, 'Do not make too much of the insurrection in Bulgaria.' . . . Nevertheless they neither of them seemed to suppose Bulgaria fit for autonomy, though the Italian was more prepared for it than the Austrian. Count Zichy said, 'Votre discours avait eu un grand effet ici'—probably a diplomatic compliment; but Corti said that he thought the present agitation had saved England from a great mistake, though he also thought it was now going too far; but he said that, if England and Russia agreed, the Turk was helpless. I said to the two ambassadors that the Turks seemed to me to have only one resource, the power of massacring. 'Was that a real danger?' They thought it was a danger, but exaggerated. . . . We had a beautiful dinner, and the count told me he had tapped a bottle of the very best Tokay from his estate in my honour, and he conducted Flo down to the hall when he came away."

Before leaving Constantinople, Forster, strongly against the advice of some of his friends, accepted an invitation to a dinner-party given by a notorious Philo-Turk. He was determined, however, to hear both sides. At that time the war of intrigue in Stamboul and Pera was at its height, and, as was natural, a man of Forster's position in the House of Commons, who had already held high office and who was certain to hold it again, was the object of almost as many intrigues as though he had been the Sultan himself. It was not an easy thing for any man, especially for one comparatively unversed in Oriental craft, to steer safely through the conflicting currents which were whirling around him. But he had two means of protecting himself—his native shrewdness, developed during years of business in Yorkshire, and his inflexible rule always to hear both sides of a question before making up his mind regarding it. At this dinner he certainly heard the other side, and he expresses his "amazed astonishment" at some of the

statistics which were offered to him as evidence on behalf of the Turks—statistics which, as it happens, were contradicted by every official document in existence. But during the whole time of his stay in Constantinople, Mr. Forster had other means of acquiring knowledge of the actual condition of affairs besides those afforded by his frequent meetings with influential Europeans and Turkish officials. The American missionaries at the Robert College were impartial witnesses, and they gave him much valuable aid; whilst, day by day, during his whole sojourn, his rooms at Misseri's were besieged by Bulgarians and Armenians, who came to him—often by stealth—to tell him the story of hideous wrongs suffered by themselves or by those near and dear to them. He heard all these tales, which would have been tedious in their endless reiteration if it had not been for their terrible character, with patience, and gave his interlocutors such advice and assistance as he could. “As the steamer moved off for Varna, I said, ‘Heaven be thanked!’ for if I had stopped much longer, Stamboul would have become too hot for me.”

Summing up, whilst on the way home, some of “the final impressions which had survived the confusion of conflicting statements and stories,” he wrote: “The drilled private Turk soldier has many virtues—very brave, very handy, good-tempered, sober, obedient. Some of the atrocities have certainly been committed by the Regulars, but any army would have done the same if encouraged, not checked, by their officers. The officers are worse than their men, and the fat pasha generals the worst of all. The Government is beyond description bad, ignorant, inefficient, corrupt—places bought or given to despicable favourites, merit going absolutely for nothing. The Minister of Marine, Achmet Kaiserley, cannot, for example, read or write, and has no especial force of character. . . . The new Sultan, if strong, can still do a great deal; but a constitutional Government, resting on the balance of forces, seems to me impossible, for there are no forces to balance. Russia is the bugbear of the Turks and of the old school of English; Ignatieff's opposition is the excuse for every failure, and his advice for every mistake; and every insurrection is created by Russian agents. I do not believe it. Without doubt for many years the Russian aim has been to replace the Turks by Christians, whereas our aim has been to keep the Turk where he is. Therefore the Christians have naturally looked to the Russians, as the Turks have to us. We might have done much with the Turk if, to use the expression of some of the best of them, ‘we had

done as they wanted—beaten them with a stick till they did right;’ but since the Crimean war we had done nothing but encourage their extravagance by lending them money, and encourage them in misrule by telling them that we would save them from its natural consequence, punishment by Russia. The first thing now to do is for us and Russia, if possible, to agree, and then ask the other powers to consent. Austria, or rather Hungary, would be unable to refuse. But what to ask for? Take Bulgaria. Promises of better rule are waste-paper. An European commission by the side of the Turkish officials seems impracticable, and would end either in military occupation or in nothing. Absolute autonomy is a desperately strong measure. If given to the Bulgarian people, the Greeks would demand either autonomy for Thessaly and Epirus, or their addition to the Greek kingdom, and, seeing that Bulgaria is not at present in insurrection, I do not see how, if autonomy be given to it, the Greeks could be refused. This would reduce European Turkey almost to the city of Constantinople. Would the Turks accept this without a death-struggle? Most persons say no, and prophesy a massacre of Christians in Asia Minor and an attempt at it in Europe. As regards Europe, I do not believe it. . . . But this is an extreme measure, especially when the immediate effect of absolute autonomy is, to say the least, doubtful. . . . Upon the whole, were I entrusted to make terms with Turkey for Bulgaria, I would ask for absolute autonomy and ask strongly, proving to the Turk that he had brought the demand upon himself; but I would hear his counter-proposals. There is no such bargain-maker as the Turk, either in politics or in the bazaar, and the ultimate result might be local self-government, Christian governors in Christian villages, Christians admitted in fair proportions to the civil offices, to the police, and also to the army. But this would require not only a promise to the European powers, but a pledge, the fulfilment of which these powers should have the authority to enforce.”

Such were Forster’s views at that epoch in the history of the Eastern question. Returning by way of Vienna, he had some talk with our ambassador, Sir Andrew Buchanan, whom he found, like most of our representatives abroad, disturbed by the unprecedented uprising of feeling in England which had followed Mr. Gladstone’s pamphlet and speeches, though inclined to take a more practical view of the new situation which had thus been created than were some of his colleagues. England was reached early in October, and Forster’s first act was to arrange for a meeting with his constituents, in order that he might address them on the absorbing question of the hour.

CHAPTER XVII.

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TORY GOVERNMENT.

MR. FORSTER'S speech to his constituents after the termination of his visit to the East excited an altogether unusual amount of public interest. His position in the Liberal party would, of course, have made the speech an important one under any circumstances; but that autumn of 1876 had witnessed a complete revolution in the political sentiments of this country, so far as regarded our foreign policy, and the first utterances of a statesman after that revolution had been effected had therefore a special interest for the country at large. There was, however, a third reason for the interest which attached to Mr. Forster's speech, that far outweighed either of the others. Whilst other statesmen had been discussing the question of the future of Turkey upon the evidence furnished by Blue-books and newspapers, Mr. Forster had gone to the fountain-head. He had been upon the spot; he had actually talked with those "unspeakable Turks" who were being held up to the condemnation of the whole civilized world; he had listened to the stories of outrage and cruelty as they fell from the lips of men who had themselves been the victims of the abominable misgovernment of Bulgaria, and he had heard all that could be urged in palliation of that misgovernment by the rulers who were directly responsible for it.

Mr. Gladstone's tremendous indictment of Turkish misrule, though it had carried the overwhelming majority of the nation with it, had excited the deepest wrath among those politicians who clung to the old ideas and who did not sufficiently recognize the influence of moral feeling in the domain of politics. Many of these men believed that the stories which had shocked the nation when they were first made known in the summer were mere "coffee-house babble," the inventions or exaggerations of newspaper correspondents. Such persons looked with hope to Mr. Forster, fondly believing

that he would justify their incredulity and prove to the world that, after all, the Turkish Administration was not so bad as it seemed. On the other hand, it cannot be doubted that those who had followed Mr. Gladstone in his first righteous cry of indignation against the authors of the massacres of Batak and Tatar-Bazardjik were now even more Gladstonian than Mr. Gladstone himself, and they expected from Mr. Forster, not merely an emphatic confirmation of every statement contained in the pamphlet on the Bulgarian horrors, but a strenuous support of the bag and baggage policy, not as it had been formulated by Mr. Gladstone himself, but as it was popularly understood by those who wished to outdo the ex-Premier in his detestation of the Turk.

Mr. Forster disappointed both of these important sections of the public by his speech to his constituents. He disregarded, on the one hand, the strong temptation which was offered to him of regaining all his lost popularity with the Radicals by the simple process of saying ditto to Mr. Gladstone. On the other hand he resolutely refused to echo the argument of the old official class. The reality of the outrages, as they had been described in the pages of the *Daily News*, was fully admitted by him, and the unspeakable iniquity of the system under which such outrages had been possible was duly exposed. Further than this, he declared that England, even if her own selfish interests might be affected by her repudiation of the old alliance with Turkey, had no right to put those interests for a single moment in the scale against her duty to the victims of the Pashas, who depended so largely for the maintenance of their authority upon English support. In all this, of course, he gratified to the fullest extent the adherents of the bag and baggage policy. It was when he came to discuss the remedy for existing evils that he caused these persons bitter disappointment. The autonomy of the Christian provinces of Turkey, he pointed out, could not be obtained without a war—a statement which subsequent events most fully justified, and which it is difficult to understand that even the most heated partisan could have resented at the time when it was made. It was clear to his mind that, until Turkey had suffered defeat on the field of battle, she would never consent to give up her dominion over the most important provinces in her empire. The next point to be considered was what was the utmost that could be wrung from her without a resort to the sword? Forster's proposal was that, by the concerted action of the great powers of Europe, the Sultan should be compelled to give a constitution to the

Christian provinces of the Balkan Peninsula similar to that enjoyed by Crete, a constitution which should be under the guarantee of the Great Powers and subject to their supervision and control.

It is not easy to understand why this proposal should have excited the bitter anger of an important portion of the Liberal party, except for the fact that virtually the suggestion had already been adopted by Lord Derby, then Foreign Secretary, and that consequently political capital could not be made out of his speech by the opponents of the Government. Still the fact remains that he was bitterly assailed for his failure to endorse the policy of bag and baggage to the uttermost, and that one at least of his critics thought it right to insinuate that he had simply made this proposal because it seemed to him a safe thing to take the middle course on any important public question on which opinion was seriously divided. The reader who has followed Mr. Forster's statement of his views as recorded in the preceding chapter will know how utterly false was this particular interpretation of his motives, and will understand that the opinions which he expressed at Bradford, after Lord Derby had written his despatch proposing a joint appeal to Turkey for the concession of a constitution to the Christians, were precisely identical with those which he had formed when on the spot at Constantinople after a close investigation of all the circumstances of the case. Among those critics who were most severe upon him was the *Spectator*, and to one of the editors of that journal he wrote as follows, in reply to some criticisms upon his speech:—

To R. H. HUTTON, ESQ.

“Wharfeside, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,

“October 11th, 1876.

“MY DEAR HUTTON,

“Your letter grieves me not a little. I am very sorry you so dislike my speech, though I wonder that, after our conversation, you did not expect it. I hate differing from you, especially on this matter, and it is not pleasant to think you also think me a ‘trimmer,’ though, as you do think so, it is the act of a friend to say so. Please bear in mind two or three things. (1) All my approval of Lord Derby's proposal is based upon the supposition that it does really demand from Turkey the concession to the powers of a treaty right to secure the fulfilment of her promise. (2) This supposition is not an

unreasonable one, inasmuch as Russia assented to the proposal. The letter of the Czar to the Austrian Emperor was not an alternative proposal, but a suggestion as to what Austria and Russia should do together if Turkey refused. (3) The immediate question when I spoke was whether it was wise to press upon Turkey the acceptance of this proposal, and the fear which I had was that Turkey would be encouraged by the *Standard*, *Telegraph*, and *Pall Mall* to try to put off the powers by a mere promise of better government. What, therefore, I had in my mind was not the substitution of local for absolute autonomy; but pressure upon Turkey to accept the actual and, in fact, only proposal which had been made by the six powers. At the same time I abide by my incidental statement that it was wise at first to make the proposal which I suppose to have been made. I believe, and I am glad to believe, that the beginning of the end is come, and that the rule of the Turk in Europe, and perhaps also in Asia, is doomed. The question is, how best to arrive at the end; how to let this desirable doom be accomplished with the least accompaniment of evil, and how to replace the bad present by the best future; which best future, I agree with you, would be the establishment of free Christian communities. So much for aim and object; but as to means, you would ask nothing short of independence for the three provinces, preserving the suzerainty of the Turk, but depriving him, as in Servia, of all internal control. I would be willing, before demanding this independence, to put upon the Turk the responsibility of refusing the demand by Europe that local self-government and equal treatment of Moslem and Slav should be secured by a European guarantee. Now, as regards your plan, I fear Turkey would not accept it without war, inasmuch as Thessaly and Epirus, also Albania, must follow suit, and European Turkey would, in fact, be restricted to Constantinople. This war, though certain to end in Turkish defeat, would be desperate and bloody, and especially dangerous to the Armenians and other Christians in Asia, whom we ought not to forget. (4) Absolute autonomy cannot be established without foreign occupation—that is, a foreign army to oblige Moslems to submit. It is desirable, if possible, to avoid the European jealousies that may arise from foreign occupation.

“Now, with regard to this plan, it is stated, (1) That it could not work. (2) That it would not be effective. (3) That it would impose upon the powers, especially England, intolerable responsibilities. I admit that it would be difficult to work, that really good government might not be the immediate result, and that the responsibilities might be onerous; but,

after all, we must remember that we have only a choice of difficulties and evils and dangers. I do not feel myself competent to declare that plans proposed by such experts as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and my Constantinople correspondent, whose letter you will, I hope, see in Friday's *Times*, are altogether impracticable; and, as regards efficiency, remember that by a moral repudiation of physical pressure Europe would have obliged the Porte to enact reforms, would have a voice in the choice of the first administrators, and would be known to have a force at hand ready to compel submission to the new *régime*. Can any one deny that Bulgaria, for instance, would be therefore put upon the road to free self-government? Then, as regards our responsibilities, what I have to compare them with are the responsibilities involved in the war which would probably result from the other course. There are those who would say that we ought to hold off altogether and fold our hands, and let the Eastern question solve itself. This would be our best course if we had no duties to fulfil and no interests to protect. The question seems to me to lie between the immediate dismemberment of the European dominions of the Porte, and a participation by Europe in its government of its Christian subjects. The advantages of the latter plan would be that, if accepted by the Porte, war would be avoided, and the joint action of the six powers would be maintained.

"So much in explanation of my speech, and in reply to your charge of a love of compromise for compromise' sake, but events both march and change quickly. An armistice, I am glad to say, seems probable, and time will thus be given to the six powers for concerted action. It seems to me, then, that men who like you and me have a common ultimate object of replacing the Moslem rule by free Christian commonwealths, but who, I suppose, also agree in preferring to attain this object if possible without a desperate war, ought (1) to cling to concerted action among the powers, and (2) to support the Government in any measure tending toward our object, while at the same time keeping up the pressure for its realization.

"What a long serawl you have made me write. Show this to T——, and ask him to look at Friday's *Times* for the letters I sent up, and for one which I have sent with it which contains much of this.

"Yours ever,
"W. E. FORSTER."

Whatever might be the criticisms upon his action of those who regarded him as a "trimmer," Forster still clung steadily

to his own line of opinion with regard to the question which excited so deep an interest throughout Europe, and which was the cause of such serious difference of opinion in England.

To MONSIEUR PULSZKY, *Buda-Pesth.*

“Wharveside, Leeds, October 24th, 1876.

“MY DEAR MR. PULSZKY,

“‘Great excitement at Pesth,’ says my paper. ‘Great anti-Russian demonstration expected. Torchlight processions suggested to the Turkish Consul, etc., etc.’ Exaggerations, I do not doubt; but I can well understand that the crisis just now must intensely interest you all, and I can imagine the debates in the Casino and the Liberal Club. We think of little else in England, but to us it is a dilettante matter compared to you. I hope with all my heart you will keep your tempers and your heads, and not make a rash scare. Surely it is getting plainer and plainer every day that Turkish rule in Europe will weigh down you or any one who tries to keep it up. Our philo-Turks are doing their best to scare us about Russia; but they will not succeed in bringing us into war. As to the chances of war between Russia and Turkey—that is, open war—it is no use wrangling about them, they alter so from day to day. One tendency of importance I have been altogether unable to follow—the intention of Roumania. Russia must have got at her since I was at Bucharest. I suppose your Parliament is now sitting. I do not think our session will begin before its usual time—that is, February. . . . Since our return I have been kept very quiet by a vile cold, caught between Vienna and Dover; but it is better now. I often look back to our pleasant Danube trip, and feel that, thanks to you, I understand your relations to the great question of the day far better than I did before.

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.

“If Eber is with you, tell him I now always look first in the *Times* for his letters.”

It was in the midst of this strong political excitement that Forster visited Aberdeen for the purpose of delivering his address as Lord Rector. The address dealt with the question of the help which university life could offer a man in training himself to be a capable politician. “You could hardly,” said Forster, addressing the students, “have found a rector less versed in scholastic knowledge or more ignorant of college life

than myself. However, here I am, and my present business is to talk to you for an hour or so. . . . One thing is quite clear; you are a new force just come into the field; you, or most of you, have the battle of manhood still to fight, though some of you, I suspect, have already rehearsed it only too faithfully in childhood. Your drill is not yet over; your posts are not yet fixed; you are, as it were, in training at the *depôt*. Above all, you will have to fight hard, and you know it. If Oxford or Cambridge were blessed with a rector, he would in delivering his address have before him many young men who would suppose that life had no struggles for them, was to be to them a journey of pleasure. Poor fellows! they would soon discover their mistake; but you will not make that mistake. You know that you, almost all of you, have to make your own way, and to earn the pay you will get. So far I am one of you. I, also, had to make my own way; but when I come to the path in life on which I set out, but few of you, I imagine, intend to tread it. Not many of you, I suppose, are looking forward to a commercial career, but the large majority of you to professions, either legal or medical or clerical or scholastic. Well, then, how can you and I find a common ground? Is there nothing on which you might expect me to give you any counsel? I think there is one matter, and that of no slight interest. I am a politician. For some years politics have been my chief occupation. You all of you are, or will be, or ought to be, more or less, politicians. Let us consider, during the short time that we are together to-day, what help your university life can offer you in training yourselves to be capable politicians. . . . Who are the real governors of the nation? Not the ministers, who are the servants of the Sovereign. Not the Sovereign, who chooses these ministers in order that they may carry out the will of the people. Not even the voters, who are, as it were, the machines by which its will is discovered, expressed, and registered; but the men who influence this will, and persuade the voters, who regulate and modify public opinion by writing, by talk, by books, or pamphlets or newspaper articles, or sermons or speeches, by conversation with acquaintances or friends, and, above all, by the example of their lives. Now, surely our universities ought to turn out men able in one or other of these ways to influence public opinion."

Speaking, later on, of the character of the work which falls upon the politician in this country, he said, "Not since Rome in the height of its power has any Government had such duties to perform, such problems to solve, so many human

beings dependent upon its action, as that free and public Government in which all of us here present have, or will have, our share. It is no matter for boast or for national pride; it is rather a matter for most serious and anxious thought: for, be assured of this, no nation can afford to leave its duties unfulfilled, its problems unsolved. With nations the unprofitable servant is assuredly cast into outer darkness. Nations can only be saved by works; for them no death-bed repentance will avail; their balance must, on the whole, be on the right side. Let us try for a moment to weigh the burden which our country has taken on itself—

“ That weary Titan
 Staggering on to her goal,
 Bearing on shoulders massive,
 Atlantean, the load,
 Well-nigh not to be borne,
 Of the too vast orb of her fate ! ”

“ We often talk of our Indian empire. What does it really mean? Government in India is a terrible reality. It means not merely law and order, safety to life and property, but protection to more than two hundred million of men from the forces of nature—more destructive, alas! there than elsewhere, —from pestilence and from hunger; and such an arrangement of taxation as shall not dry up the springs of industry: such a foreign rule from without as, while controlling the native forces within, shall not starve or stifle, but rather nourish and strengthen them. Turn from Asia to Africa. Take only one among many African illustrations. The present and future well-being of those myriads who dwell between the Cape Colony and the tropics rests now upon the wisdom of our colonial Government more than any other human agency. Leave Africa, and go to the other side of the world, and we find the very existence of the islanders of the Pacific endangered also by bold lawlessness, and only to be saved by English laws and English administration. There is, I fear, sometimes a recklessness and cynicism in the manner in which we forget our responsibilities in dealing with other countries, and, as it were, play with their existence in the exuberance of our power. Take, for instance, the hundreds of millions in the vast empire of China. Many of you will have read pamphlets or speeches or leading articles, coolly discussing whether some step or another, taken to promote our special interests, to push our trade, to save our dignity, or, as it is termed, assert our position, may not break this country and expose its inhabitants to all the terrible evils of anarchy. These cynical writers may overrate our power, but no doubt

for destruction it is immense and terrible. Nor is this power to be despised for protection and for beneficent reform. All politicians must sometimes feel that they are but flies upon the wheel of destiny; but a British politician will also occasionally find that his word or his act, apparently unimportant, has, as it were by accident, a great result, owing to the immense force of the machine with which he has to do. . . . Nor is Great Britain only an Asiatic and African and Australian or an American power. Our European neighbours, who wish us to do their work for them, to fight their battles, or to pull their chestnuts out of the fire, are never tired of taunting us with our insular indifference and our shopkeeping apathy. Nevertheless, money-lovers and money-worshippers as we are, it is a foreign question which for many weeks has possessed the public mind. In our intense sensitiveness regarding our national responsibilities, sometimes we seem to forget that England alone cannot solve the Eastern problem. But there is no doubt that the safety and well-being, the protection from dire oppression and foul outrage, of millions of men and women in European and Asiatic Turkey, do in great measure depend on the part our ministers take in the present international deliberations. Surely it ought to be a cause of rejoicing to men of all political parties that the people, the real governors whom all ministers must serve, have shown unmistakably that in this matter they desire the just and right thing done, and not merely that which might seem to serve some special British interest."

After glancing at the many problems of domestic policy with which the politician has to deal, and at the dangers to society which lie in the spread of materialism, he touched upon the question of faith in an overruling Power as part of the equipment of the statesman.

"It is but the old problem of fate and free will in a new form, which history will prove to you has never been solved. The stories of other men's lives, as well as the experience of your own, force you to admit that the unsolvability of this problem is a condition of existence, but history will also tell you this, in which you may take comfort, that, as with individuals so with nations, just in proportion as there has been a sense of the overruling Power, call it fate, or God's will, or the law of humanity—and if there be a law, must there not be a Lawgiver?—just in proportion as this conviction has possessed men and nations with its awful truth, have those men and those nations shown the power of their individual wills. The disciples and St. Paul obeyed the call; Mahomet believed in

his mission; William III. was a Calvinist; Napoleon had faith in his star. . . . It is when men have had faith in the unseen that they have had power for themselves, and therefore power for others, and then it has been that the world has made its steps forward; and if at any time there has been a nation more than others possessed by this faith, hearing the call from above, seeing the work which has to be done, the task to be fulfilled, that nation has then led the van in the world's march. And as it has been, so it will be; and there are some who are not without the hope that in our, or rather in your, time, and in our country, there may again be faith as there was of old; who feel that Englishmen and Scotchmen long to have the religious fervour without the fierceness of the Puritans or the followers of John Knox, and that this longing will not be always in vain. We have been warned that there is a religious rock ahead far more dangerous than the political or the economic rock—the divorce, as it has been termed, of this country from its religion. If there be really this divorce no one can exaggerate the danger; but amid all the religious confusion, all the Church quarrels, which beset us, there seem to me some signs that the intellect of our country will not only not be divorced from religion, but will again find its full religious expression.”

Finally he said, in summing up the qualifications of the true politician,—

“There remain these two absolute necessities—the knowledge, the quick perception, of right and wrong; and the desire to do right. It is not for me to turn this address into a sermon or to attempt to preach the lessons which many a man here has learned in his Highland home from the Bible read by the father or mother; but remember this, that the politician you have so kindly heard to-day, declares that of all possible occupations politics is the most unprofitable, the least worth following, if for any personal or still more tempting party object its true aim be forgotten; and that true aim is this—the fulfilment by our country of her duty, by which fulfilment, and by which alone, can be secured her power and her superiority and the well-being of her sons.”

Such was Forster's confession of faith as given to the young students of Aberdeen; nor could his real sense, both of the dignity and the duties of the politician in this country, be more faithfully expressed than in the words I have quoted.

His visit to Aberdeen was a memorable triumph, and was all the more gratifying to him because of the stormy waters through which he had been passing ever since the Education

Act had been placed upon the statute-book. He and Mrs. Forster were the guests of Dr. and Mrs. Webster.

From his Diary.

“November 24th.—Went to music-hall a little before twelve. In committee-room Dr. Pirie—the principal, being ill—presented me with the degree in the name of the senatus. I made a short reply, and was clothed in gown, hood, and cap. Professor — came in, in high excitement. The proceedings must be stopped; the students more uproarious than ever; ‘they have torn up the benches.’ However, when I got in, they behaved very well, cheering furiously, and occasionally whistling, but on the whole attentive. Art students in red, medicals in plain dress. My address took hour and a quarter.”

On the 27th the freedom of the city was presented to him before a great assemblage of the citizens at the music-hall, and in his reply he spoke chiefly of the Eastern question. That evening he was entertained at supper by the students, in the large hall at the Marischal College, and there soon established himself on the best of terms with his friends. The visit to Aberdeen was a pleasant and cheering end to a year of not a little excitement and anxiety.

The year 1877 was a momentous one in European politics. The conference at Constantinople, at which England was represented by Lord Salisbury as special envoy, broke up without result, and Russia, after the usual period of diplomatic equivocations and military preparations, entered upon the long-dreaded war for the subjugation of the Turk. Public opinion in this country was seriously divided. The effects of Mr. Gladstone’s anti-Turkish campaign in the previous autumn were still felt, and very few men of importance in the political world would have ventured to advocate active interference on our side for the purpose of maintaining the Porte in full possession of her power in the Balkan Peninsula. On the other hand, with the actual outbreak of war between the forces of the Czar and those of the Sultan, all our old suspicions of Russian good faith were reawakened, and the party known at the time as “Jingoes” came into existence. In this party were to be found many Liberals, who disapproved of the severity with which Mr. Gladstone had exposed the atrocities of Mussulman rule, and who believed that, after all, the first duty of an Englishman under the existing circumstances was to prevent any extension of Russian influence in Europe. On

the other hand, there were divisions in the ministerial camp. Lord Salisbury had been not a little disgusted by what he had seen at Constantinople; and, if popular report at this time was to be believed, he came back far more favourably inclined towards the Christians of the East, and especially the Greeks, than towards the Turks. There were other influential men among Lord Beaconsfield's supporters who did not approve of his policy in foreign affairs, and who dreaded lest what seemed to be his reckless determination to oppose Russia in every stage of her advance towards Constantinople might end by landing this country in a war.

It was in the high places of Liberalism, however, that the greatest difficulty was felt at that time. Mr. Gladstone's complete withdrawal from political life, as we have seen, had been of very short duration, and he was now as energetic an opponent of the ministerial policy as he had ever been during the course of his life. But he still refused to take the responsible leadership of his party. That post continued to be filled by Lord Hartington, and it is needless to say that the difficulties the latter had to encounter as leader of a minority in the House of Commons were enormously increased by the fact that he had to deal, not merely with his followers, but with his brilliant predecessor in the leadership, who could at any moment by his own individual action lead the Liberal party throughout the country into any course to which he might choose to direct them, whether it was one which commended itself to the judgment of Lord Hartington or not. Without entering into any discussion as to the merits of the situation which was thus created, it is at least obvious that it was one of the greatest delicacy and difficulty for Lord Hartington. He had, however, in Mr. Forster a most loyal friend and supporter during the whole of this trying time. Forster, indeed, could not forget that he had himself been nominated for the post of leader, and that undoubtedly a large section of the party would have preferred his appointment to that of Lord Hartington. He felt bound, in justice to those who looked to him as the foremost representative of their opinions, to make his influence felt in the counsels of the party, and, as a matter of course, he took a very prominent part in the deliberations among the leaders, which were so frequent during the year. But, throughout, his personal loyalty to his official leader was beyond dispute, and he unquestionably did much to smooth Lord Hartington's path during this anxious period. His diary for the year is full of interesting accounts of the political anxieties and disquietness of the time and of

the discussions—often very perplexing and unsatisfactory—which took place among the Liberal leaders. There are comparatively few of his memoranda on these subjects which it would be fair to those who survive him to reproduce here. A few extracts from the diary will, however, suffice to indicate both the atmosphere in which he was living at the time and the part which he himself was playing in connection with public affairs.

“*February 5th.*—Called on Hartington about one. Good friendly talk with him. Found we very much agreed in not wishing war with Turkey against Russia. Called afterwards on Granville, and found him agreeing to this, but inclined to suggest a European demand for the cancelling of the neutralizing half of the 8th article of 1856 treaty. Dined at Granville’s. Gladstone and Mrs. G., Lord and Lady Cardwell, Hartington and self. My dearest not able to go. A very long talk, but G. very reticent, rather provokingly so. He and Lord Cardwell said how repentant Lord Aberdeen had been for the Crimean war. After a long time Granville pointed to his proposal; but Gladstone did not catch it; was strongly of opinion the Turks could not fulfil their promises, even if they wished to do so.

“*February 7th.*—I had to go to meeting at Granville’s of ex-Cabinet, with Harcourt and James. Harcourt, Argyll, and Gladstone very hot, but final result general agreement that Granville and Hartington should press for further general action of the powers, a European demand from Turkey, with a threat of coercion, if not complied with threat to be carried out. England to assent to and even to initiate such action, but not to be committed to separate action with Russia. I agreed, but said we must guard against the danger of finding ourselves involved in separate action with Russia, by reason of no other power responding to our initiative.

“*February 10th.*—Breakfast at Grillion’s. Large attendance. Sat between Paget and Acland. Salisbury there just before breakfast. After breakfast I had some talk with him, after the others had left. ‘Were you surprised by Midhat’s fall?’ No; he had prevented the Sultan giving in, and he thought they would not get on together—thought Said and Mahommed Daoud had much to do with his fall; that Midhat was *entêté*; administrative faculty, energy, and pluck, but not much else. Sultan doubtful; a man who had displaced two Sultans, Ahmed Vefvik, the most power of any men he saw, but obstinate, though at the council he had declared in favour of concession. Ignatieff, clever and pleasant, but too active,

and had early let the Turks find out that he wished for peace. He, Salisbury, had been glad to get away; for some time had thought that conference could do no further good.

"*March 19th.*—A note from Lady Salisbury, asking Jane and me down on Tuesday to meet the Ignatieffs. We could not go, because engaged; but I volunteered to turn up at breakfast, Wednesday morning."

The visit to Hatfield was duly paid in the manner proposed by Forster, and the result was a talk between him and General Ignatieff, the importance of which has not even yet quite passed away, and the report of which, as drawn up in Forster's memorandum, is altogether too fully characteristic of his frank and unconventional methods in diplomacy to be omitted here:—

"On Monday, Lady Salisbury asked my wife and myself to go down to Hatfield last evening, to meet the Ignatieffs. We were engaged, to my great vexation, but I volunteered to turn up at breakfast this morning. And accordingly went down by midnight train, slept at Salisbury Arms, and appeared just as they were coming out of chapel to early breakfast.

"The General, of course, was diplomatic enough to be sorry he had missed me at Constantinople—had read and approved my speeches, etc., etc. He [himself rattled away incessantly, with the utmost apparent abandon—generally in English, breaking sometimes into French,—his busy eyes shifting as fast as his talk. Nothing could seem more frank, but I was always reminded of Congreve's distich—

"No mask like open talk to cover lies,
As to go naked is the best disguise."

"What is the use of lying, when truth, well distributed, serves the same purpose?"

"Breakfast was at small tables. The General, Lord and Lady S., White, and self together.

"Immediately after breakfast, Salisbury had to go to a Cabinet, and Lady S. withdrew, and left us to converse together.

"This first talk was about Elliot—how bad his return would be; how the Turks had played him against Salisbury; how they would still reckon on English help against Russia, if, after all, he went back, etc.; how he had talked to the Turks, in contradiction to S.; which I said I could not believe, but I dare say E.'s honesty let the Turks see he took one line and S. another.

"I thought it was my turn to be frank. 'You know,

General, the absurd story they told us at Constantinople. I heard constantly, not from Elliot, but from many persons' (I believe I did from E., but I would not tell him that), 'that you were the real cause of the Bulgarian business, advising the Grand Vizier that there was no insurrection, and that no regular troops were wanted.'

"He was, I think, somewhat taken aback, but said, 'What I did say was, that there was no insurrection worth mentioning; and there were four thousand regular troops in the districts, which could have easily quelled it. Your Bulgarian informant,' he added, 'was one of the Bucharest young men, who, like all conspirators, overestimated their strength. They had not ten thousand, but four thousand, and they knew nothing about fighting. Tchernaiieff was a fool to expect Bulgarian aid; he ought to have tried to cut off Bosnia by a junction with Montenegro.'

"At breakfast I had asked him as to Tchernaiieff's statement that there were never three thousand Russians in the Servian army. He said four thousand was the highest possible number.

"I said, 'Well, General, I went down with Russian Red Crosses in the Austrian steamer, whom I saw in the Servian uniform at Belgrade the next morning.'

"He laughed, 'Ah! Red Crosses really, but their enthusiasm carried them away when they got to Belgrade.'

"With regard to the conference, he said he was against it at first, thinking that talk without coercion could do no good, but now he thought it had done good, laying the foundation for European action.

"It might have succeeded, however, 'if I and Lord Salisbury had gone together to Midhat, and told him that if he did not give in, the two Grand Dukes would be across the frontier, and the English fleet in the Bosphorus; he would have given in at once.'

"'Yes,' I said, 'but most of us thought, some months ago, that the Turk would give in, if convinced that he would be left alone with Russia.'

"'Yes,' he said, 'but Elliot prevented his thinking this,—the Constantinople Turkophiles told him, "No matter what Lord S. says, three or four months after the war begins, England must help you."'

"We left Hatfield by the 11.20 train, and he, Edmond Fitzmaurice, and I were alone in a compartment. What he said then, had some importance. It was clear the protocol was as good as settled; the sole hitch was the demobilization.

“We are asked to make a public declaration that we demobilize. We cannot do this without three conditions: (1) Turkey must make peace with Montenegro; (2) Turkey must begin to reform; (3) Turkey must also demobilize, and begin to withdraw her troops in good order. Unless we get these three conditions, we tell the Christians and the Turks and our own people, that we leave the Christians to the tender mercies of the Turks, who will massacre them to a certainty.’

“I said, as to 1, ‘Montenegro will make peace, if you wish it.’

“‘True,’ he said, ‘but we cannot ask the Prince to concede more. He has already give up his harbour, and is now only asking for what the conference asked for him.’

“As to 2 and 3, I said, ‘You do not expect the Turks to give way.’ And, to try him, I added, ‘Now you are so peaceful, why do you not begin to demobilize? It must take time; and if Turkey flares up, as you seem to expect, there will still be time for you to interfere before your army gets away.’

“‘True,’ he said, ‘but we cannot publish this to the world.’ He added, ‘Your Government will be in an awkward position—your refusal to sign the Berlin memorandum brought on the Servian war; and now, when we are willing to make great concessions to save the peace of Europe, your Government would make them useless by obliging us to leave the Christians to be massacred.’

“I said, ‘Very clever of you to have brought it to this.’ At which he grinned complacently.

“His letters from Constantinople were, he said, like mine—pointing to anarchy—the Turkish districts in Asia Minor would have a terrible famine if the *redifs* were not soon sent back to cultivate.

“One other remark worth recording. ‘It is the interest of you English,’ he said, ‘to separate the temporal from the Mussulman spiritual power, to have a Mussulman grand pope at Mecca, instead of a Sultan pope at Stamboul.’

“Upon thinking over this conversation, I thought I ought to tell Salisbury what the Russian said would be his case against the Government, so I called and told him. He said he thought it would do good for him to repeat it to Lord Derby. I also told Northcote, whom I came across.”

From his Diary.

“March 23rd.—Met Cardwell at Hartington’s at eleven, to talk over Fawcett’s notice on Eastern affairs, which after all

comes on on Friday. Thought it very inconvenient. Negotiations on Protocol still proceeding, but likely to fail because our Government wants Russia to promise to demobilize, which she will not do without obtaining conditions from Turkey. House. Fawcett did come on. We agreed Hartington should follow, saying why we do not vote for him, which he did very cleverly. After him, Plunkett, and then Gladstone. Had to leave during his speech to dine with Lady Ely; met Sir Henry Elliot, who, like a thorough gentleman, was quite willing to see me, but very philo-Turk.

*“April 26th.—*House; dined at home. Gladstone showed me resolutions he was bent on proposing on Eastern question. Breakfasted at Goschen’s, to meet Nubar Pasha, the late Armenian Minister of the Khedive. Very clever; spoke English well. Hating the Khedive; describing, in most vivid and bitter language, the oppression of the fellahs, and the cruel, selfish weakness of the Pasha; but giving the idea that his aim was English intervention, and so every word he said was an appeal both to our interests and our sympathy.”

On the following Monday the terms of Mr. Gladstone’s resolutions were stated by himself in the House of Commons. They were as follows:—

“First. That this House finds just cause of dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on September 21st, 1876, and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria.

“Second. That until such conduct shall have been essentially changed, and guarantees on behalf of the subject populations other than the promises or ostensible measures of the Porte shall have been provided, that Government will be deemed by this House to have lost all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown.

“Third. That in the midst of the complications which exist, and the war which has actually begun, this House earnestly desires the influence of the British Crown in the councils of Europe to be employed with a view to the early and effectual development of local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of Turkey, by putting an end to the oppression which they now suffer, without the imposition upon them of any other foreign dominion.

“Fourth. That, bearing in mind the wise and honourable policy of this country in the Protocol of April, 1826, and the Treaty of July, 1827, with respect to peace, this House further-

more earnestly desires that the influence of the British Crown may be addressed to promoting the concert of the European Powers in exacting from the Ottoman Porte, by their united authority, such changes in the Government of Turkey as they may deem to be necessary for the purposes of humanity and justice, for effectual defence against intrigue, and for the peace of the world.

“Fifth. That a humble address, setting forth the prayer of this House, according to the tenour of the foregoing resolutions, be prepared and presented to her Majesty.”

The result of Mr. Gladstone's action was something like a split of a serious character among the Liberal leaders. To propose resolutions of this kind at the moment when Russia was about to draw the sword against Turkey, was likely, it was believed, to weaken the peace party within the Cabinet. Forster sympathized to a great extent with Mr. Gladstone; his fear being that this country might be dragged into war on behalf of Turkey. His friends among the Liberal leaders besought him, however, not to vote with Mr. Gladstone, but to support Lord Hartington, who was strongly opposed to the resolutions. Eventually, after an anxious and critical week of discussion, the difficulty was overcome by the acceptance by all parties among the Liberal leaders of a suggestion made by Forster. “About the best day's work I ever did,” he remarks in his diary.

This suggestion was that the second resolution should be modified, and the third, fourth, and fifth dropped. All the ex-ministers except Mr. Gladstone were, in the first instance, opposed to this solution of the difficulty; but after some days of painful suspense they agreed to it, and the crisis in the fortunes of the Liberal party was overcome.

From his Diary.

“*May 7th.*—The news got out in the morning. Called on H—— about twelve. When I got to the House found great excitement, Chamberlain showing about a letter from Gladstone throwing doubt on the agreement. Trevelyan asked his question, and there was a noisy violent wrangle for nearly two hours, which was much lengthened by Gladstone's inability to give a clear answer. However, he did at last say what was agreed, and about seven this wonderful man got up and spoke for two hours and a half—one of his best speeches, ending with an appeal of very great eloquence, looking, indeed, like an inspired man. Cross finished the debate with a very good

and moderate speech. I did not dine anywhere. Settled I should not speak to-morrow.

"*May 10th.*—Very busy over speech. Had intended to speak third before dinner, Goschen speaking later; but we found it would not do, the supporters of Gladstone saying they ought to speak. So I was very late, getting up about eleven, after Peel, who had got together a large House to hear one of his eloquent unconnected personal chaffs. It was not easy to bring the tired House back to argument, but after a time I managed it, and spoke for about an hour and a quarter.

"*May 14th.*—House. Close of Eastern debate. Good speech by Hartington, followed by a poor speech from Northcote, and an eloquent but warlike speech from Gladstone. Division about two: full House; large majority (for Government), 131.

Later on in the session the House had its first great experience of Irish obstructions.

"*July 31st.*—House. South African Bill in committee. Parnell, Biggar, and Co., seven Irish obstructives, began obstruction at one. I felt I must help Government to carry bill. Government thought of dropping all clauses after clause 3. I did not much like this, but told Lowther I would support the Government. However, Government found their men did not like the concession, so when Goldney proposed this plan and Newdegate opposed it, I followed, saying I would support Government if they took on themselves responsibility, but, if not, I would sit indefinitely, and recommend this course, which House cheered, and Northcote assented. After this, obstructionists behaved better until two, when they tried progress. I backed the Government in fighting bill through, and we fought on through the night. Childers first, then Smith, then Selwin-Ibbetson replacing Raikes. The House mustered well, more than one hundred in every division. Relays, acting on previous plan and my public advice, came down in morning. About nine, I went with Northcote to Speaker. We all agreed that we must win, and suspend the seven, if we could not exhaust them; but Speaker very anxious to avoid suspension. Finally agreed we should not try it till about two. Northcote and I agreed to go away, and meet again in House at half-past one. I went home. Went to bed about ten, to be called at 12.45, but Kensington sent for me at twelve. On coming down I found the seven staggered by fatigue and a threat by Northcote of suspension, but Harcourt very hot for censure or suspension after victory, which would have been very foolish. At length they succumbed, and, about two, the

bill got through committee. The House sat till past six, doing other business; the longest session on record. I dined at home, and then went to bed."

During the autumn of 1877, he and Mrs. Forster and their family visited Germany and Bohemia. When at Carlsbad, he met Lord Odo Russell, with whom he had an interesting conversation, which he recorded in his diary:—

"*September 11th.*—A very interesting talk for some time. He (Lord Odo Russell) was very frank. Bismarck had wished for a long peace—that is, a real settlement,—and had thought it possible with an alliance, which meant dictation. During the conference he got frightened by possibility of Franco-Russian alliance, and then aimed at war. He was now anti-Turk. The Turks had shocked his moral sense by their mode of carrying on war. The Emperor was strongly for the Russians; only prevented from joining them by his ministers. Bismarck was really anxious for an English alliance, and very civil, particularly about all second-rate matters—South Africa, etc. Bismarck constantly instigated us to take Egypt on the ground that, until we were at ease about India, we were a constant cause of unsettlement—a 'spoilsport' for Europe. He could not understand why we should not do this now, when two years hence France would be too strong. Odo Russell acknowledged that behind this instigation was the desire to make an alliance between France and us impossible. He admitted that Bismarck lost his head when thinking of France; but they persuaded themselves to believe in danger from France, in order to keep up the army at its full strength."

He returned by way of Berlin.

"*September 21st.*—A messenger in the morning from the Crown Princess's chamberlain, to find out whether I was staying and could come to dinner at 7.45. . . . Went down to Wildpark and dined at the palace. The Crown Princess, her eldest daughter, young Prince Meiningen, her betrothed, and the Crown Princess's second son, a boy in naval uniform, sat by the Crown Princess, who was very pleasant—not philo-Turk, but anti-Russian."

The only event of importance which happened during the autumn was his visit to Bristol, where he made an important speech as the chief guest at the annual celebration of the Colston Festival by the local Liberals. Incidentally he performed one not unimportant piece of work in connection with education in the north of England; for at a meeting held at Leeds, between the representatives of Owen's College, Manchester, and the Yorkshire College, to discuss the name which

should be given to the new university with which both these institutions were to be federated, he suggested, as a compromise between the claims of the two counties, that it should be called the Victoria University. The suggestion was accepted, and the Victoria University has since that period actually come into existence. The political situation as winter advanced became exceedingly critical, chiefly in consequence of the national excitement at the advance of the Russian army towards Constantinople. This excitement was intensified by the summons of Parliament for an unusually early date in January, 1878. It was rumoured that Lord Beaconsfield and the majority of his Cabinet were prepared for armed intervention in favour of Turkey, and that Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon were at issue with their colleagues upon this point.

It was in the first week of January, and in the midst of these alarms and anxieties, that Mr. Forster delivered his annual address to his constituents at Bradford. The address was one that cost him an unusual amount of labour, and every word in it seemed to have been deeply weighed by the speaker before it was uttered. So far as the foreign question was concerned, his course was clear and consistent. He was resolutely opposed to any action on the part of this country, either diplomatic or otherwise, which might lead Turkey to the conclusion that we would interfere on her behalf provided she kept up her resistance for a sufficient length of time; but now, as in the earlier stages of the struggle, he felt the imperative duty which is laid upon all English statesmen of assisting, so far as may be possible, without violence to their principles, the Government of the day in dealing with the foreign question. He had his own doubts and fears as to the course which ministers were pursuing, but he resolutely refused, in addressing his constituents, to say anything which might add to the popular apprehensions of the hour, and he sought to calm the national susceptibilities by pointing to the fact, so fully verified by the subsequent course of events, that, whatever might happen in Turkey, when the moment came for the settlement of the Eastern question it would be the great powers of Europe, and not merely Russia and Turkey, which would determine the nature of that settlement. In short, at this critical moment there was a real desire on the part of Mr. Forster to stand by the Government, so far as he honestly could do so; but, at the same time, he recorded the most vigorous protest against any possible action on their part which might have the effect of involving us in a war on the side of Turkey and against Russia.

It was not, however, the foreign question which occupied the most important place in this speech to his constituents. The reader is already aware of the strained nature of Mr. Forster's relations with many of the Nonconformists in his constituency. Although from the first he had refused to join any movement for the disestablishment of the Church, there had long been a belief prevalent in the minds of many of the Radicals of the borough, that in due season he would be found giving his support to the disestablishment party. It has already been shown that in no small degree the bitterness with which he was assailed by the opponents of the education policy had its root in the disappointment felt by those who had entertained this expectation. Mr. Forster was determined now that he would make clear to all, without regard to the consequences, what his position was on the subject of disestablishment, and thus prevent any future disappointment like that which some had felt in consequence of his action on the question of education.

"If I were one of those," he said, "who hold the belief that any connection of the State or the nation with religion must do harm to the cause of religion, that a State Church is in itself an evil, and that therefore any attempt to uphold it is an attempt to maintain a national evil if not a national sin, then my course would be very clear. I should say, 'Care nothing for either difficulties or consequences; try your best to abolish this evil, and let consequences care for themselves.' But I am not one of those who hold this belief. I was brought up amongst those who do hold it, and who have developed the conviction upon which it is founded to an extent which goes much further than the abolition of a State Church; but I do not myself hold it, although I do think that I can understand and, in a measure, sympathize with the feelings of those who do hold it, and at any rate appreciate their earnestness. But I am obliged to take this question of a State Church as it stands, and to ask myself whether this abolition, or the attempt to abolish it, would do more harm than good, or more good than harm."

After pointing out some of the practical difficulties in the way of disestablishment, he continued: "If I were sure about the consequences of disestablishment I would ask you to help me to meet the difficulties, and would say, Try your best to overcome them. In one short evening I cannot attempt to describe or even to mention all these consequences; they are so many and so various that old England would become new England. Some of them, I doubt not, would be for good:

others, in my opinion, for evil. The chief of these changes," he continued, "would be the destruction of the parochial system. Now, what do I mean by the parochial system? Simply this—that at this moment there is not a place in England, no country parish however remote, no back slum in any city however squalid, in which there is not a minister of religion, a State servant, whose business it is to care for the highest good of every man, woman, and child, in those places. I am not prepared to ask the State to dismiss these servants. And not only is it the business of these ministers of religion thus to care for these parishioners, but these parishioners know that it is their business. There is not a man or a woman amongst them, however poor or degraded, who, when sick or suffering, or beset with the trials of this life, has not a right to go to this parish clergyman and ask him, 'What can you tell me about this better life to come?' I am not prepared to take from these men and women this right; and I am all the less prepared to do so because I know that vast numbers of these dwellers in hovels or cellars go neither to the parish church nor to any church or chapel. I wish them to know, and I wish them to continue to know, that they have a right to ask these ministers of religion, these State servants, for this help, not because they belong to this or that congregation, but because they are Englishmen."

In conclusion he referred to the fact that he had been told that upon what he might say on the relations of Church and State depended the decision of the Bradford Radicals, as to whether they would or would not attempt to prevent his return at the next election. He would only ask of them to consider fairly what he had said; but at the same time he warned them that neither upon this disestablishment question, nor upon any political question, was he one of those who waited to see which side would be strongest.

"If I agreed with the assailants of the Church I would not wait to join them when they are strong; I would join them when they are weak. In every cause with which I have been connected—abolition of slavery, parliamentary reform, education, justice to Ireland, good government of India, our union with our colonies, our friendly relations with America, our duties in Europe—I did not wait for public opinion to be formed; I tried to do my part in forming it. I have been told, and not unkindly told, that there are two sets of politicians—politicians who administrate and politicians who think and oblige these administrators to carry out their thoughts; and that the first-mentioned class are the practical

politicians, and that I belong to this class, and that, therefore, I need not be so careful about my thoughts nor so careful about my opinion. Well, I do aspire to be a practical politician, but my definition of a practical politician is not that of a man who servilely does what other men think ought to be done, but who considers what ought to be done, and, having made up his mind, tries to do it, and who, if he knows a thing ought not to be done, refuses to do it."

His outspoken speech produced a good effect. It had been, as he described it in his diary, "The heaviest bit of talking work he ever had;" but it was received with favour by almost all who heard it, and even those who differed from him showed that they respected his candour.

"Wharfeside, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,
"January 8th, 1878.

"MY DEAR PULSZKY,

"I found your note on my return home, on Saturday evening, from my meeting with my constituents. Had I received it a few hours earlier I should have been tempted—concealing, of course, not only your name but your country—to quote the first paragraph of wondering inquiry as to what England could mean, as proof of the manner in which our Government has succeeded in mystifying Europe.

"Lord Carnarvon's speech, a day or two after you wrote your letter, would rather tend to clear up matters; but I fear the poor Turks have not been altogether undecieved. The explanation I believe to be that there really has been a great contest as to policy in the Cabinet between Lord Beaconsfield and two or three not very important supporters, and Lord Salisbury with two or three other of his strongest colleagues; Lord Derby, who, though very sensible, is not a strong man, lately siding with Salisbury and Co.

"All this is very provoking and misleading for you, and somewhat humiliating for us, but, after all, vastly better in our opinion than a united Cabinet in support of Lord Beaconsfield's *recklessness*.

"When I say I *believe* in this contest of opinion, I do not *know* it. I only guess it from all the public evidence I can collect. But the important matter for you and for us is what the Government will really do. Well, I believe peace and Lord Salisbury will prevail. I think there was real danger a week or so ago that Beaconsfield might venture to be reckless; but the overpowering feeling of the country in favour of neutrality is now clearly showing itself. At any

rate I think *your* war party will only rely on a broken reed if they hope for real aid from *our* war party.

"I expect our Government will meet Parliament with an apparently united Cabinet, declaring that they always have been united, meaning only to secure Constantinople from becoming Russian, etc., and making a great merit of protecting British interests, which have never really been threatened. In this I may be wrong; but if Beaconsfield gets the upper hand and really tries to involve us in war, I think the Cabinet will split, that the country will rise up against him, and that he would quickly be displaced. When I spoke I thought the real practical danger was that our Government would oppose direct negotiations between the Porte and Russia; but my fear on that account is much less after what I see in the papers to-day and yesterday.

"The London papers have given good reports of my speech, especially the *Daily News*, but I send a local report, in order that you may compare my constituency with your own. The room was crammed to fainting—about 4600 persons—almost all men agreeing with me enthusiastically and unanimously about the war, though more than half of them differing in opinion from me about the Church. So much for our affairs. I can well understand the difficulties of Count Andrassy and of your Government, and I am grieved to think that the uncertain mysterious action of our Government should aggravate their difficulties.

"Yours very truly,
"W. E. FORSTER."

Parliament met on January 17th, public opinion being then at its highest state of tension, owing to the advance of the Russian forces towards their coveted goal on the Bosphorus.

To his Wife.

"80, Eccleston Square, January 17th, 1878.

"Thou wilt have seen the speech before this reaches thee. It bears evident marks of compromise, and the important paragraph beginning, 'Hitherto,'* is ambiguous; but I think on the whole the peace party have prevailed. If it had not been for the persistent resistance of the three peers, Salisbury,

* "Hitherto, so far as the war has proceeded, neither of the belligerents has infringed the conditions on which my neutrality is founded. . . . But I cannot conceal from myself that should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution."

Derby, and Carnarvon, backed by the quick Russian successes, I think Beaconsfield would have landed us in war. I made a long call on Hartington yesterday morning, to talk over his speech with him, and found we agreed. We had a full dinner at Devonshire House. Gladstone in full force and spirits."

"Athenæum Club, January 23rd, 1878.

"Much excitement and tension here about Cabinet suddenly summoned, and, it is supposed, to consider the Russian terms. I wish with all my heart it may be so, for there is an angry suspicion taking hold of people that Russia is playing with us. Of course the soldiers will get as far as they can until the armistice is signed."

The change of feeling which is perceptible in the extract last given affected Forster as well as the majority of his fellow-countrymen. He had been one of those who were disposed to go to great lengths in trusting Russia, as long as there was no manifest breach of faith on her part; but when appearances seemed to indicate that her promise not to occupy Constantinople was being broken, and when the Russian advance continued after the Turks had sued for peace, that angry feeling of suspicion of which he speaks took possession of every breast, and led eventually to one of the most dramatic episodes in the political history of the time.

On the very day on which this letter to his wife was written, the Cabinet had finally decided to send the fleet through the Dardanelles, and, in consequence, Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon had tendered their resignation to the Queen. Lord Derby's resignation was not made known, as he was induced to withdraw it. Turkey had sued for peace, and it was hoped that the Russian advance would be stayed. It was known, however, that the Czar was treating directly with the Sultan for the conditions of peace, and the excitement and agitation in this country were intense.

Ministers came forward with a demand for a large supplemental vote, in order that they might strengthen the army and navy in such a manner as to enable them, if necessary, to resist by force the conditions imposed by Russia upon her vanquished adversary. Mr. Forster, with the concurrence of most of the Liberal leaders (Lord Hartington being, however, opposed to any action), was put forward to move an amendment to the resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer authorizing the supplemental estimate. His action, first in moving this resolution, and subsequently in withdrawing it under very dramatic

circumstances, was at the time severely censured by certain members of the Liberal party, and it is therefore necessary that the story of those days of turmoil and agitation at the end of January and the beginning of February, when all Europe believed that the fate of Constantinople was hanging in the balance, should be told with some degree of fulness, as it is recited in his own diary.

“January 30th, Wednesday.—Was very hard at work with my speech. Terribly difficult job.

“January 31st.—Dictated speech to Florence. Sent for Childers, to whom I read it. A crammed House, and very anxious speech. Up before five. Spoke an hour and twenty-one minutes, saying what I wanted. House flat; our side not forgiving Hartington’s absence, but on the whole a success—in one respect a great success—Hartington saying, when I sat down, that he agreed with every word, warmly thanking me. General approval on our bench; very difficult, owing to not knowing whether armistice had been declared.”

The amendment was in the following words:—“That this House, having been informed in her Majesty’s gracious speech that the condition on which her Majesty’s neutrality is founded has not been infringed by either of the belligerents engaged in the war in the east of Europe, and having since received no information sufficient to justify a departure from the policy of neutrality and peace, sees no reason for adding to the burden of the people by voting unnecessary supplies.”

Diary.

“February 1st.—Debate continued. News at beginning that armistice was to have been signed yesterday. Peel replied to Trevelyan, pitching, of course, into me.

“February 3rd.—Called on Hartington with note as to line I should take on the probable cessation of hostilities; found we very much agreed.

“February 4th.—Debate continued. Dined at Grillion’s. Sat opposite to Cross. Very well to break the ice after his speech. Lord Fortescue there, who had resigned chairmanship of North Devon Liberal Association by reason of my speech.

“February 6th.—Went to Mrs. Brand’s. Found great excitement, the Government having heard from Layard that the Russians were marching on Constantinople. Doubts whether hostilely or in collusion with the Turks; but in either case great anger excited here; the anti-Russian feeling very strong.

"February 7th.—Called on Hartington. Granville came, and Frederick Cavendish, who had seen Gladstone in bed. We decided amendment must be withdrawn, but the question, How? Whether after pressure or by me at once? We agreed best for me at once, if Gladstone assented; but I made his consent a condition of my initiative. Granville and Frederick Cavendish went up to him, and we summoned caucus at Granville's at three. Gladstone and Bright came. We all agreed I should withdraw after Northcote's answer to Hartington, and fixed the exact words of withdrawal, implying no further opposition to Speaker leaving the chair. This I did, the Tories jeering less than might have been expected. Debate whether I should be allowed to withdraw, and while Bright speaking news that Derby had read a Russian contradiction in the Lords, which Northcote soon read in the Commons. Very dramatic. However, I declined to accept Fawcett's suggestion that I should put my amendment back, and before dinner it was withdrawn by assent."

The statement to which this opportune contradiction had been furnished by the Russian ambassador, Count Schouvaloff, was to the effect that the Russian army was already inside Constantinople. It was this rumour, and the statement made on behalf of the Cabinet that they were unable to reconcile their reports from Constantinople with the declaration of the Grand Duke Nicholas that hostilities had ceased, which caused the Liberal leaders to withdraw the amendment moved by Mr. Forster. No doubt, if they could have foreseen the opportune contradiction given by the Russian Government to the current rumours they would not have come to this decision, but would have persisted in pressing their amendment. They were compelled, however, to determine their course of action in view of the facts which were actually in their possession, and it cannot be doubted that their decision was a wise and patriotic one. But that large class in society which rejoices in being wise after the event was bitter in denouncing the withdrawal of the amendment when the nation had been reassured by the Russian contradiction, and it was upon Mr. Forster that the whole of the responsibility for that incident was laid. Again and again in subsequent years, when men were endeavouring to bolster up their charges against him of disloyalty to his party, this transaction was alluded to, and it was declared that he alone was responsible for the sudden and dramatic change of front on the part of the Opposition at the moment when the country was excited by the rumoured occupation of Constantinople. I have given the truth as it was

told in Forster's own diary on the very day on which the event occurred, and it will be seen that in taking this course he acted not merely with the concurrence of the official leader of the party, Lord Hartington, but of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. Never, it is clear, was a more unfounded charge brought against any man than that which was so repeatedly urged against him in connection with this exciting incident in the political history of the time. The following letter, which he addressed to Mr. Byles, of the *Bradford Observer*, dealt with the criticisms upon his action to which Mr. Forster was at that time subjected among unfriendly Liberals in the constituency he represented :—

“80, Eccleston Square, S.W., February 12th, 1878.

“DEAR MR. BYLES,

“Excuse my dictating a note to you. I fear I must allow misconception to continue to exist in regard to my course in concert with Lord Hartington and others last week, as matters are too critical to allow of any further public personal explanation beyond my speech on Friday; but I should like, if possible, to satisfy you.

“I never had a more disagreeable, though at the same time a plainer, duty than withdrawing my amendment. It was so clear that persevering with it would endanger peace by stimulating the war cry in the House and in the country, by identifying some members of the Government with the war party, and thus weakening Lord Derby, that this withdrawal was the unanimous decision of a large meeting of members of the late Government, including Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The words which I used in withdrawing the amendment were carefully drawn up at this meeting, and purposely included the withdrawal of further opposition to the Speaker leaving the chair, and therefore bound all present at that meeting not to vote in the division on Thursday. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright concurred in these words. Then came Gortschakoff's contradiction to Layard, and before the evening closed it was evident that this contradiction was more apparent than real; and, in fact, the deep irritation in the country and in the House arises from the fact that the Russians have, as it were, stolen a march and forced the Turkish plenipotentiary to assent to an armistice which left Constantinople defenceless, and, indeed, implied its *military* occupation. Compare this fact with Mr. Gladstone's assurance in his speech on Monday week, rash as I thought it at the time, that the Russians would not think of occupying Constantinople, and you may

judge of the effect and the surprise. So much for Thursday. Now as to Friday. Hartington and myself, with others of our late colleagues, thought that, whatever argument applied to the withdrawal of the amendment applied to abstaining from active opposition to the vote, unless the Government were, in the debate in Committee, to give us fresh grounds for opposition. On the contrary, Northcote took from me my chief ground of opposition by disavowing all intention to make use of any influence gained by the vote to minimize at the conference the terms for the Christians. I felt, therefore, that there was less ground for my voting on Friday than there was on Thursday. There remained, however, all the financial objections. Mr. Gladstone thought that they obliged him not merely to protest, but to vote. We, on the contrary, thought that we ought to be content with our protest, and not to weaken the Government in Europe by a full party division, or weaken the Liberal party in the country by enabling the Government to charge them with personal opposition at a crisis of danger.

"I believed we were right on Friday. I am still more sure of it now. If we were still in the field, the Government would try to throw upon us the difficulties of their position; as it is, they must face these difficulties, and it is well, both for the cause of peace and for the interests of England, that they should do so. Affairs are very critical, and it is only by assuring the Government, and especially Lord Derby, of support, that we can enable them to keep calm and prevent them being carried away by the fire-eaters of their own party.

"Of course you cannot publish this letter; but you can, if you like, show it to your son, and confidentially to any one else you think proper.

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER.

"P.S.—It must not be forgotten that Lord Beaconsfield would seize upon an opportunity of dissolution; and I suspect would, south of the Trent, at any rate in the present excitement, greatly gain. The Westminster registration agent, coming this morning for the subscription to his association, says that he does not think there would be a Liberal returned in London. This fire will soon burn out; but it is not for us to add fuel to the flames."

On the night following the withdrawal of the amendment, Mr. Fawcett made a bitter attack upon Mr. Forster, to which the latter replied, though the critical circumstances of the moment compelled him to use very guarded language. The

rank and file of the Opposition maintained their active hostility to the vote ; but Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster felt themselves bound by the declaration which the latter had made in withdrawing the amendment to refuse to go into the division lobby against the Government.

To MR. PULSZKY.

“ 80, Eccleston Square, London, S.W.,
“ March 11th, 1878.

“ MY DEAR PULSZKY,

“ How much has happened since my last letter to you in reply to yours of the last day of 1877 !

“ I have often wished to talk to you, but events have changed so quickly from day to day that writing seemed useless. Now, however, there is a comparative lull until either the Congress meets or is indefinitely postponed. For ourselves we had a real war scare for a time, the war party greatly aided by the Russian reticence, to use a mild term. You see, we were given to understand that Constantinople would not be occupied except for strategical grounds, and these grounds disappeared when Turkey declared her willingness to accept the Russian terms, so no wonder at the effect of the discovery that the armistice involved the potential occupation of Constantinople, by the withdrawal of the Turks from the lines they were well able to defend. One immediate effect was that I and many others withdrew our opposition to the vote of credit, partly because we thought under the circumstances the Government, *quâ* Government, required support, and partly because any further opposition would have endangered peace by more and more identifying the Government with the war party. We thought it better to throw the whole responsibility on the Government, and events have justified our action, Lord Derby and common sense having recovered, apparently, the ascendancy in the Cabinet. Now that there is no fighting to help Turkey, the present danger of war is passed ; but we are all of us face to face with a hard job, that of replacing the Porte in Europe.

“ To my mind the Turk in Europe is worse than dead. He merely lives as Russia's vassal and agent ; but upon that point I should like your opinion. There are still those in England who think that Turkey, with Constantinople defended by the Straits and the lines to its west, and fed by Asia Minor, will again be a real power ; but surely this is a mistake ? The disease of corruption and misgovernment and effete

incapacity will only be more virulent from being the more concentrated. I take it now for granted that *you* will accept Bosnia and Herzegovina; but I suppose you are waiting to be asked not only by the beys and the Catholics, but by the Congress.

"I suppose the annexation to Greece of Thessaly and Epirus is only a question of time; but I confess I am puzzled by the unwillingness of your Government to let Russia get to the Danube. Upon the whole I am hopeful of the result of the war, ghastly and destructive as it has been. I write in haste.

"Yours very truly,
"W. E. FORSTER."

To his Wife.

"80, Eccleston Square,
"Sunday evening, March 24th.

"Thy telegram, my dearest, arrived just as we were going to dinner, and delighted we were to get it. I was quite anxious, the day was so drearily cold. . . . This morning Flo and I went to Vere Street to hear Dr. Coghlan. I was much struck and pleased. I expected, I know not why, a flowery address; on the contrary, very able, very good, but no tickling, and quite a small congregation. We walked back in the bitter wind, and this afternoon I made no end of calls. . . . An unusual gathering at Lady Waldegrave's, Schouvaloff and Lyons, etc. After Schouvaloff left, I said I supposed the real hitch about the Congress was not the mere question how the articles should be considered, but a larger question: Whether the European settlement of 1856 was to be replaced by another European Settlement, or by a treaty between Russia and Turkey permitted by Europe? Almost everybody dissented, but Lord Lyons said nothing. I went away with him, and in the street he said, 'The real point is the one you put.' As yet Russia is said to stand stiff, but she is expected to yield. Gladstone's speech will not make her more likely to yield."

On March 28th Lord Derby finally resigned his post as Foreign Secretary, in consequence of the warlike policy of Lord Beaconsfield and the rest of the Cabinet, evinced by their determination to call out the reserves, and to take other steps of a menacing character. Public feeling again rose to a fever height of excitement.

To his Wife.

“Athenæum Club, March 30th.

“. . . I am just come from a long talk with Hartington. I have told him, with entire truth, that never was I so bothered with any public affair since I have been a politician—what with the conviction that we ought to protest against a wicked purposeless war on the one hand, and on the other hand with the fear of fanning the war fever by appearing to weaken the Government when the country is in danger, and ‘country before party’ won the Worcester election. Nevertheless, twenty years hence, if we do go to war, these disputes about the congress will be lost sight of, as now are the disputes about the holy places before the Crimean war. The verdict of history will be against the reckless, foolish people who went to war for nothing. We must take care they do not add a spiritless, half-hearted wavering Opposition in their condemnation. The Tory papers and partizans are doing their best to minimize the action of the Government, and to declare it means peace. Of course, being a game of brag, it may succeed; but the fear is that the Russians are nearly as hot-headed as ourselves, and what may not be feared when we have the Prime Minister justifying warlike measures by talking about the balance of power in the Mediterranean and the freedom of Europe?”

“House of Commons, Tuesday, April 2nd.

“Again, my dearest, my note must be very short. . . . There was an Irish row last night, and I was dragged into it on the Sunday Closing Bill, and I went on dividing against obstructionist publicans till five, Gladstone staying half an hour after me. We are still in doubt what actual course to take with the great vote, which begins on Monday—whether to move an amendment or not. If we could get a real debate without an amendment, it would be the best. Salisbury’s despatch is very able, and it points to the real question. Since we cannot modify the treaty by diplomacy, shall we do so by war? I do not wish to be forced to answer this question, but if forced I say—No. I do not, however, wish to answer the question, because ‘No’ may encourage Russia to refuse the concessions she ought to make.”

“House of Commons, Wednesday, April 3rd.

“I write, my dearest, from the table of the House, and can only say a few words. The Vaccination Debate has now been

coming on for some time. I have had to speak and dine, and must now watch the debate with the possibility of having to speak again, and I must be at Exeter Hall at my Wesleyan meeting at six, and ought to be there a few minutes earlier. It brings up very early associations going to Exeter Hall, where I used as a child to attend anti-slavery meetings with my aunts."

"Athenæum Club, April 8th, 1878.

". . . As for plans, I should much wish to come down, but I fear I cannot, as I might have to speak on Thursday, and, at any rate, must watch my opportunity.

"My position is one of great difficulty, but of not complex, rather of simple difficulty—between fear of letting the country get committed to a war policy without a protest, and fear of encouraging Russia not to concede.

"If, therefore, this debate be not the closing debate, if the Government deprecate discussion on the ground of negotiations, I may be quiet, but I hardly think I can. . . .

"I am now come from a long and very satisfactory chat with Hartington. He read me a rough sketch of his probable speech, and, to my surprise, I found we practically agreed. He will oppose any attempt by England alone to modify the treaty by war in case of negotiations failing, or, indeed, any but European action, and therefore he will oppose action by only Austria and England."

It is unnecessary to pursue the history of this exciting time, for it is rather the story of European politics than that of Mr. Forster's life which would need to be told if I were to do so. Enough has been said, however, to show what was the policy which Forster favoured, and what were the means by which he sought to carry it into effect. He was resolute in his opposition to any plans which seemed likely to increase the danger of our being involved in what he regarded as a wicked and useless war; but he saw, more clearly than some of his contemporaries did, that direct opposition to the Government at every stage was not the method by which that danger could best be avoided. He refused, accordingly, to comply with the wishes of those who were more anxious to maintain an unceasing warfare against ministers than to enable England, which was for the moment in the hands of Lord Beaconsfield, to pass successfully through this stormy crisis in her fate. Whether he was right or wrong in maintaining this attitude it is for the country at large to judge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CAUCUS.

DURING the Easter recess of 1878 Mr. and Mrs. Forster paid a short visit to Pau. Whilst there Forster met with a somewhat serious accident. He was thrown from a carriage and broke his leg. He had to remain some time at Pau, and then, having had the injured limb encased in plaster of Paris, he was brought home, reaching London on May 13th. It is characteristic of his indomitable energy that, very soon after his return, and when still completely crippled, he went to the Athenæum in order to vote at an election in which he was interested.

"I climbed up the stairs on my back," he records in his diary, "and voted, and then had a rubber."

On the 23rd he reappeared in the House after his accident. "Was cheered as I hobbled in, and Northcote and many others kindly asked after me. I spoke a little after ten. Well received. I spoke thirty-five minutes with lame leg on a knee-rest crutch. Quite at ease, and my voice quite as good as ever."

In the summer the storm of anger against him among the Bradford Radicals broke out afresh, and in a new and virulent form. The bitterness of the election of 1874 had never been forgotten, and it had been stirred into new life by the censures which had been passed upon him in connection with the withdrawal of his amendment to the supplemental estimate by those who were ignorant of the fact that he had acted upon that occasion as the instrument and the mouthpiece of the whole of the leaders of the party.

The battle which he was now called upon to wage, and in which he was destined to win a complete victory, though it was not obtained without much exertion and many sacrifices, was one directed against a determined attempt on the part of the Liberal caucus of Bradford to compel the distinguished

representative of the town to place himself absolutely at its mercy. The Bradford Liberal Association had been reconstructed, after the general election of 1874, upon the Birmingham plan. Its members were elected at public meetings held in the different wards of the town, and it was assumed that they faithfully represented all sections of the Liberal party in the constituency. Theoretically, there can be no doubt that Liberal organization upon this basis approaches to something like perfection, so far as its representative character is concerned; but, as a matter of fact, experience shows that the result of the elections of associations of this description is to place power almost entirely in the hands of a small body of active men, for the most part holding extreme views on political questions. Mr. Forster, at all events, believed this to be the case, and it cannot be said that he looked with any particular degree of favour upon the substitution of the caucus for the somewhat elastic form of organization which had hitherto prevailed in Bradford as well as in most other English constituencies.

He himself, as the reader knows, had fought the election of 1874 chiefly by the strength of his own hand. The Liberal organization of that year, such as it was, had done its utmost to secure his defeat, and had conducted its opposition to him with as much bitterness as though he had been a pronounced Tory instead of being, as he was, an advanced Liberal. It was not in human nature for any man to forget this fact when he was approached by those who claimed to be the successors of the old organization, and was asked to recognize them as the spokesmen of the whole Liberal party in Bradford. Mr. Forster had then represented the borough for a period of nearly eighteen years, and his relations with the majority of his constituents were of a peculiarly warm and friendly character. The Bradford Liberal Association had adopted a rule by which it required every candidate in the Liberal interest for the representation of the borough to submit himself, not to the constituency as a whole, but to the caucus, and to abide by the verdict of that body upon his claim to represent the town. Much might be urged in favour of such a rule when applied to unknown candidates seeking election for the first time, but it is difficult to find a single argument in its favour when the intention was to apply it, not to a new candidate, but to one who was actually the sitting member for the borough, and who had represented it in the House of Commons for not far short of twenty years. Yet this was what the members of the Bradford caucus sought to do when

Mr. Forster was asked to give them an assurance, in view of the next general election, that he would submit his name to the association in the first place, and allow that body to decide whether he should or should not again become the candidate for the representation of Bradford.

He absolutely declined to comply with this request. Mr. Alfred Illingworth, subsequently one of the representatives of Bradford in the House of Commons, and at that time a very influential member of the Liberal party in the town, communicated the wish of the association to Mr. Forster, and stated at the same time that, if Mr. Forster accepted the rule binding him to place himself in the hands of the association, he would be happy to propose him as one of the Liberal candidates at the next election. In his reply Mr. Forster said, "I am much obliged to you for your kind proposal to submit my name to the committee of the Liberal Association, but in doing so you refer me to its fifteenth rule, which requires the proposer of any candidate to give such candidate's assurance that he will abide by the decision of the association. I am sorry to say that I cannot give this assurance, and I think my reason for declining to do so can hardly be misunderstood. I am perfectly aware that my name, proposed by you, and supported not only by those who have always voted for me, but also by those who act with you, would, as you say, in all probability be accepted by the committee; but I cannot bind myself to a rule which even theoretically enables any association to stand between me and the constituency I have so long represented. Do not suppose that I forget the necessity of organization or underrate the importance of the Liberal Association, or that I question its right to exercise that influence over the representation of the borough which is due to the number as well as to the individual earnestness and sincerity of its members. Nor need I say that I should give any resolution to which the committee might come my most respectful consideration. But I cannot forget that I am member for the borough, and I cannot think it right to make myself the nominee or delegate of any association within the constituency, however important that organization, or however I may agree with it in political opinion. It is not for me to question the rule which the members of the association have thought it right to frame, but I may mention that I have not been able to find any such rule in other similar organizations. I have by me the Birmingham rules, where it certainly does not exist. I cannot but hope that my being unable, for the reason above stated, to comply with the condition of this

rule may not prevent that union of the party which must, after all, be the object of the association, and which would, I feel sure, restore to Bradford its old position as a Liberal borough."

Mr. Illingworth, on behalf of the association, continued to press him to yield the point in dispute by agreeing to submit himself absolutely to that body. Mr. Forster replied to Mr. Illingworth's second letter, pointing out the difference between a new candidate and a sitting member. The latter, he contended, had a right to consider himself, and his constituents had a right to consider him, a candidate for re-election; but the rule of the association demanded that he should bind himself beforehand to withdraw at the bidding of a majority, however narrow, of a committee.

"It is possible," he said, "that the member might be able to persuade not merely the majority of the constituency, but the majority of his party, that he is right; and yet the condition to which this rule would have bound him would prevent him from appealing to his constituents or to his party, or even to the second thoughts of the committee. I say nothing of my own personal position, and pass over any claim I may have for long service; but I cannot but think that compliance with such a condition would be intolerable to the self-respect of any politician who rightly regards political duty, and that if such a rule became general it would greatly injure the political life of the country. Imagine a wave of prejudice overwhelming the constituency, as, for instance, at the time of the Crimean war, would it be desirable that the Cobdens and Brights and Milner Gibsons of the future should be bound not to offer themselves for re-election, and should be forced to hold their tongues and submit to ostracism in silence, because they had undertaken not to stand if the majority of a committee disagreed with them?"

The correspondence was published, and excited not a little indignation among those Liberals who thought more of the services rendered by Mr. Forster to his country, and of the independence of Members of Parliament, than of the success of the caucus system of organization. Even those, however, who were most strongly in favour of this particular system were not prepared to support the action of the members of the Bradford Association. It need hardly be said that amongst the leaders of the Liberal party there was a unanimous feeling in favour of Mr. Forster, so far as his dispute with the association was concerned. Mr. Gladstone, who had spoken strongly in favour of the new method of organizing the party,

held just as strongly that the special rule of which Mr. Forster complained in the Bradford constitution was wrong, and he proffered his services for the purpose of putting an end to the dispute.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“Fox Ghyll, Ambleside, September 2nd, 1878.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“Thank you very much for your note. I wish with all my heart I could suggest some way by which you could deliver yourself on the organization question, as I think the advocates of some such rule as the Bradford one have a lurking hope that you are on their side. The Birmingham people disavow this rule; but I am not quite sure that I have as much faith as you have even in the Birmingham system, mainly for this reason: that I doubt any permanent committee, or any committee annually elected in quiet times, thoroughly representing the party when an election is imminent. Birmingham itself may be an exception, political interest, not to say excitement, there being both strong and abiding; but generally I suspect that the men who elect the committees are themselves but a small part of the party. And is not this likely to happen—Either that, being thus small, they would degenerate into wire-pullers, as in the States; or, as in Bradford, represent the agitation for disestablishment, or some such special question? In either case there is a chance of the committee being disavowed by the party when the election really comes. The committee say, ‘What a shame! We are the real workers, and so ought to be allowed to choose.’ ‘Who asked you to work? We do not trouble about the election every year, or every day in the year, but that does not mean that we do not consider that we have as much to do with our member as you have.’ I, therefore, rather prefer the old system in our towns; namely, a permanent committee to look after the registration, but a choice of candidates by the whole party just before the election. It seems to me that one of the best safeguards against the wire-pullers—that is, against the real danger besetting large constituencies—is so to frame the machinery as to keep members as much as possible in communication and contact with the whole constituency, and candidates as much as possible with the whole party. Just one word about myself. Illingworth, in one of his letters, says that until the last election I had acknowledged the right of the Electoral Association, then the Registration Committee,

to decide whether or no I should be a candidate. This is an entire mistake. I did not even know that such a right was claimed.

“Yours very sincerely,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

The members of the Bradford Liberal Association were themselves hardly prepared for the storm of disapproval which was caused by their attempt to bring their old member into subjection to them. Especially were they unprepared for the fact that much of this disapproval came from those upon whose support they had most confidently reckoned. Mr. Forster, on the other hand, received from men of all parties the warmest thanks for the action he had taken in thus asserting the right of sitting members to deal directly with their constituents, and not to sacrifice their personal independence as the representatives of their fellow-countrymen by becoming the mere tools of any association or committee. No decision was come to, as neither party to the conflict would give way; but as to the fact of Mr. Forster's triumph there was nowhere any question.

To MRS. CHARLES FOX.

“Fox Ghyll, Ambleside, September 15th, 1878.

“Thy loving note, my dearest Aunt Charles, has been in my pocket almost ever since I received it—a constant pleasure to me. I hardly like, however, troubling thee with a letter; but do not think it needful to reply. I know writing is wearisome to thee, and I also know I am not forgotten.

“I went up Colwith Brow yesterday, not by those old lodgings of yours, but very near them. What a crowd of memories rush in!—mournful many of them, and yet some of them very pleasant, and the bright, pure figure of thy dear husband standing out clearly, pointing upward *then—now* beckoning to us.

“My wife and the girls and I have been snugly ensconced here for more than a fortnight, and I do so love this country. I wish we could stay on; but on Tuesday I must be off to Aberdeen, taking Jane and Florence with me, to say good-bye to my Lord Rectorship duties; and then after a visit or two in Scotland, we return to Yorkshire by Ireland, spending a few days with Lord Emly near Limerick, and I intend to revisit the places in Connemara I saw with my father during the famine. . . . Thou asked me about my leg. It is well—

proof thereof, I walked up Fairfield yesterday week; but I am getting sadly fat and stiff and prosy, as this letter shows. . . .

“Thy very affectionate

“W. E. FORSTER.”

To MR. THOMAS COOPER.

“Stranraer, N.B., September 29th, 1878.

“. . . I, like you, am very melancholy about public affairs; but I cannot think the present *régime* will last. If I thought so I should be as hopeless as you; but I think I see some symptoms of common sense, and feelings of duty regaining their ascendancy. I am sure my disgust and indignation at Beaconsfield is not a party feeling. I disapprove and often disagree with the Tories, but my feeling towards him is altogether different.

“Your ever affectionate

“W. E. FORSTER.”

The autumn brought many perplexities and anxieties in connection with public affairs. Although the Berlin treaty had been concluded, there were still troubles in the south-east of Europe, whilst Afghanistan, with the Ameer of which we were now at war, had become the burning question in Eastern politics. Writing to the Duchess of Manchester regarding events in Turkey, and the announcement of Lord Beaconsfield at the Guildhall banquet, that England would maintain the treaty in spirit and in letter, he said (November 12th)—

“Upon one matter I do not fully see my way. Disraeli’s high-handed action is sure to make a strong popular demand for depriving the executive—nominally the Crown, really the Premier—of the war-declaring and treaty-making power, and we shall all of us have to consider how we can meet this demand. Without doubt, to grant it might at times be inconvenient. On the other hand, to strain prerogative, as has been done, is very dangerous, and would as a rule be undesirable. This is one of the cases in which his reckless conduct is ensuring a great reaction, which, if it does not come in my time or the Queen’s, may, I fear, come in the Prince’s time. Another reaction I expect very soon. You know I have always thought Gladstone and Lowe too docile scholars of the old Manchester school. I always contended against their disparagement of the colonies and of India as wrong in itself and sure to become unpopular. But now Disraeli is, as regards India, going much too far in the other direction. Nothing will

be more unpopular than the notion that we are an Eastern rather than a Western power; that the centre of gravity is to be shifted from London to Delhi, and that we are to let the British bark be towed behind an Indian ship. I expect to *have to contend against* a strong desire to cut the cable and get rid of the dependency."

The outbreak of the war between this country and the Ameer of Afghanistan was one of the events which occupied much of the attention of the public during the autumn and winter of 1878. Forster strongly condemned the steps which brought about our interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. In January, 1879, he made his customary speech to his constituents at Bradford, and no passages in that speech were more emphatic than those in which he condemned the policy of the Government and of Lord Lytton, then Viceroy of India. Yet it is to be observed that, even when condemning most severely the steps taken by the Government, he did not follow the lines of many members of the Liberal party who advocated the immediate withdrawal by us from the country which had, owing to our action, been plunged into anarchy. However reprehensible might be the policy which had caused Afghanistan to be reduced to this state, and however anxious the majority of the English public might be to dissociate themselves from all connection with that policy, Forster recognized the fact that the nation, by the action of its ministers, had incurred responsibilities from which it could not free itself. It might be that we had sinned greatly in meddling with Afghanistan at all; but, having meddled with it, we were bound to see that order was restored before we again ceased to interfere in the affairs of the country. This was not the line which at the moment found favour with the most strenuous opponents of the Government, and Forster was called to task for having thus indirectly given what appeared to be some measure of countenance to the proceeding of Lord Beaconsfield.

His relations with the Bradford Association had not improved at the time when he appeared before his constituents, and the meeting at which he delivered his annual address was a somewhat disorderly one; though, as usual, after the first ebullition of feeling on the part of those who were displeased with his action regarding the caucus, he had a fair hearing from all, being in this respect much more fortunate than his chairman, who was not listened to at all. The Bradford Liberals, however, were sincerely anxious, if they could, to come to a settlement of their dispute with their representative. A gentleman empowered to act on behalf of the local associa-

tion asked Mr. Forster whether, if a special exception were made in his case, and the rule requiring candidates to submit themselves absolutely to the decision of the caucus was suspended so far as he was concerned, he would be willing to join the association.

If, as some persons alleged at the time, he had been thinking of nothing but a personal triumph for himself, this solution of the difficulty would certainly have met his views, for it would have enabled him to achieve a distinct personal triumph of no ordinary kind. But Forster looked upon himself as being in the matter merely the representative of a large body of his fellow-countrymen. It was not for personal freedom from the rule of the wire-pullers that he was contending, but for the general independence of members of Parliament who had already secured the confidence of their constituents, and whose freedom of action would be greatly fettered if the obnoxious rule of the Bradford Association were to be generally enforced. He replied, therefore, to the overtures made to him on behalf of the association, that so long as their rule was in existence it was impossible for him to join their body. In November, 1879, the dispute was satisfactorily ended by a unanimous vote of the association agreeing to make the rule permissive in its character, by changing the word "shall" into "may." When the members of the association had thus surrendered the point at issue, Mr. Forster at once joined the association, and worked amicably with it in preparing for the general election, which was then approaching. On May 29th he received a deputation from the association, who invited him to become a candidate, on behalf of the Liberal party for the borough, Mr. Illingworth being his colleague. "I gave them a grateful, civil answer, but not detracting from my rights; so ends that controversy."

The spring of 1879 had added another to the many burdens which the English Government at that time had to bear. This was the outbreak of war in South Africa, occasioned by our attack upon the Zulu king, Cetewayo. The earliest incidents of that war, the terrible disaster of Isandhlwana, and the splendid defence of Rorke's Drift, made a great impression in this country, and for the moment turned all our thoughts from other questions. Forster was in thorough agreement with his colleagues in opposing both the policy which had brought about this most unhappy war and the weakness shown by ministers in dealing with it, and both in the House and in the country he was one of the most powerful assailants of the Government. His views upon the South African

question, however, were not altogether those of the majority of the Liberal party. He had no sympathy, in the first place, with the cry of weariness which arose in certain quarters, and which demanded that England should cut the Gordian knot of her South African difficulties by withdrawing herself within the limits of Cape Colony, and leaving the great field of enterprise, which she had made her own, to younger and more vigorous rivals. Such a cry could only excite something like disgust in the breast of one who was full of faith in the future of the empire, and who believed that England had been called by Providence to play a leading part in solving the great problem associated with the advance of civilization throughout the world. But there was a still higher feeling than this faith in the imperial destinies of his country which influenced Mr. Forster in relation to South African affairs, and that was his unceasing interest in the natives of the territories which English traders and English troops were fast bringing into contact with the outer world. Once more he had an opportunity of proving that his devotion to the interests of the weak and oppressed was no fleeting sentiment, and the instincts which he had inherited at his birth led him to espouse the cause of the blacks of South Africa as warmly as he had ever done that of the blacks of the United States.

During the session the activity of the Radical section of the Liberal party in its attacks upon ministers was unceasing. A dissolution was manifestly approaching, and what may be called the fighting contingent of the Opposition was eager to lose no opportunity of discrediting the Government. It was a difficult and anxious time for those who were the leaders of the Liberal party, and Lord Hartington on more than one occasion, but notably in the debates on the question of the abolition of flogging in the army, was brought into somewhat rude collision with influential Radicals. Forster stood loyally by his chief at this time, and whilst publicly rendering him all the assistance in his power, did his utmost in private to bring together all sections of his party.

As the autumn advanced, the rumours of an impending dissolution became more frequent. Public opinion was strongly divided as to the result of an appeal to the country; but the general feeling in London, at all events, was that Lord Beaconsfield's star was still in the ascendant, and that the new Parliament would be as strongly Conservative as the old one. Mr. Forster did not share these views. In spite of appearances, and the fears of many of his own friends, he was convinced that a great reaction had actually set in. On October 30th,

he notes in his diary, "Went to Registration Office, and went through list of seats with Harcourt and Adam. Gave ourselves a majority of three in England and Wales, and of forty-two in Scotland"—a prediction of Liberal success which time proved to have erred on the side of moderation.

In the midst of the eager party strife which characterized the recess, he did not lose his interest in the grave problem associated with the state of Turkey, but maintained his correspondence with the various friends he had made both in Bulgaria and at Constantinople.

To DR. WASHBURN.

"Wharfedale, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,
"October 24th, 1879.

"DEAR DR. WASHBURN,

"Your letter of October 8th is most interesting, and your expectation—well grounded, I fear—of trouble in Eastern Roumelia very disheartening, not to say alarming; but I am very helpless in the matter. I have lost all confidence in Lord Salisbury, and therefore cannot send him your letter confidentially, as I should have done before he replaced Lord Derby.

"If Parliament was sitting, questions might be asked; but during the recess all I could do would be to publish your letter with your name, which of course is out of the question. A day or two ago my wife read to me your last paper in the —, and we were both of us deeply interested. How long can Turkey last? It must be sad work living in a country rotten to the core. I see no chance of cure. The old ruling principle of the Government is gone; and there is no new principle to replace it. I suppose the old principle was the Theorematic rule of the Sultan, and I suppose, also, that to expect that since Mahmoud's death is absurd.

"If Europe was to hold aloof, would not the Turks right themselves and put in a new autocrat? But I suppose European interference just keeps the Sultan alive long enough for Turkey to die with him.

"I shall be very curious to see your next letter, and to know how *you* read the new Austro-German alliance. Many of the supporters of our Government are now preparing to throw the Turk over, and put Austria in Turkey's place as the barrier against Russia. I wonder what Layard thinks of the position? Anyway, Lord Salisbury, in his allusion to the alliance at Manchester, has shown great want of dignity and reticence.

“I wish you would give me your present answer to this question: *Could* England get the reforms in Asia Minor, contemplated by the Anglo-Turkish Convention, carried out by any amount of pressure *without* force? If you reply, ‘No,’ then clearly we ought to take the first opportunity of getting out of the Convention. We have no right to risk the lives of our own people by using force, and justice both to ourselves and to the Christians in Asia Minor, obliges us to give up the guarantee if we do not get the promised reform.

“As yet no one knows whether our Government will face another session. I am inclined myself to think not, and that there will be a dissolution in January. But that is not, I believe, the general opinion.

“Circumstances may change the current of opinion; but if there was a general election now I think the Government would lose their majority, but that the opposition also would not be in a majority if the Home Rulers joined the supporters of the Government. Not a pleasant outlook.

“We went for a few weeks to Switzerland and Italy, getting as far as Florence. Much enjoyed ourselves, and gained health.

“Yours ever truly,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

As both the great English parties girded themselves for the struggle, which each was resolved to fight out to the bitter end, the work thrown upon Mr. Forster naturally increased. He had been sneered at on more than one occasion as an example of the “fighting Quaker,” and it was undeniably true of him that no man ever relished more keenly the delights of a sharp encounter of wit with wit, and argument with argument, such as usually characterizes a political contest in this country. So long as the fight was a fair one, waged for a worthy cause, he enjoyed it as much as any man possibly could do.

The contest which had now begun, and which was to reach its culminating point in April, 1880, was one in which he believed most emphatically that his own cause was a righteous one. He was eager, consequently, to assist his party by speech and counsel wherever he could do so. In the autumn of 1879 he went down to Westmoreland to aid Sir Henry Tufton in his election there, and dealt many a damaging blow at the reputation of the Ministry. A little later in the year he took part in one of the most remarkable political demonstrations of the time. It was intended to impress the country with the

determination of the Liberals of the West Riding to put an end to the domination of Lord Beaconsfield, so far at all events as the great county of York was concerned. Those who were associated with him then know with how keen an interest he took part, not merely in the vast public meeting at which more than twenty thousand persons were gathered together under one roof, but in the organization of the party that was necessary in order to make the demonstration a success. For when Mr. Forster had an object to gain he thought no pains too great to be bestowed upon his task, and many can bear witness to the fact that in the preparations for this Leeds demonstration of November, 1879, he took an active share, not thinking it derogatory to his position to perform even the simplest parts of the work which fell to the lot of the members of the committee. In the neighbourhood of his own home, at Otley and at Bradford, as the hour for the conflict approached, he frequently made his appearance as a public speaker, arraiguing the Government for a policy which he believed to be thoroughly immoral in its character and disastrous in its results.

It was on the 8th of March that Parliament was dissolved. The secret had been well kept, and it was only upon the evening of that day that the members of both political parties were apprised that the long-expected hour of battle had arrived.

“When I went to the House,” writes Forster in his diary, March 8th, 1880, “rather late for questions, found note from Northcote, saying that as Hartington was away he told me he had important communication to make to House. I told Childers and Lowe, and sent to Kensington. We guessed it was probably dissolution. So it was—dissolution for Easter. Much excitement; more surprise and cheering on our side than theirs. I said a few words to express our satisfaction, and, like other members, went off to telegraph—to Illingworth, offering to come down to-morrow.” He and Mr. Illingworth had been accepted as the Liberal candidates for Bradford, and side by side they fought the battle of this election. But it was not his own battle only which Forster had to fight. Like the other Liberal leaders, there were urgent calls for his help on all sides, and he worked hard wherever he was wanted, among the other speeches he made being one to introduce Mr. Herbert Gladstone as the Liberal candidate for Middlesex at a meeting at the City Liberal Club, and another on behalf of Sir Henry Tufton at Kendal. The “flowing tide” was with the Liberals everywhere during those few weeks of intense excitement.

But consciousness of this fact did not cause Forster to relax his efforts. Victory at Bradford was certain, yet he worked as though his return depended upon a single vote. On March 22nd he began his campaign there: "Down to very large open-air meeting called by the workmen on vacant space up Leeds road. I spoke for some forty minutes. Three to four thousand present. Think I was well heard. Reception excellent; almost every hand in our favour. After that, two more meetings at Great Horton; then a cup of tea at the club, a meeting near Undercliffe, and one in the Drill Hall. A hard day. Six meetings. Three longish speeches besides the open-air one. In all these meetings the vote for us almost unanimous. Twenty-two public meetings in these five days. My throat weak at the beginning, but no weaker at end."

As the end of the struggle approached, the pace became more rapid still. The Bradford nomination was on March 30th. On the following day Forster went to London, voted in the City election at the Guildhall, and for Westminster in Ebury Square; called to have a talk with the whips at the Liberal offices; played a game of whist at the Reform Club; and returned to Bradford the same evening, hearing on the road down of the Liberal triumphs at Stamford, Grantham, Lincoln, and Peterborough. Of course, luncheon and dinner had both to be eaten in the train. The next day was that of the Bradford election. "Majority immense," he says in his diary; "more than five thousand for me, almost four thousand for Illingworth, and almost exactly corresponding to our canvass promises. Home by 10.55 train. Received warmly by crowd at Burley." Yet another day of hard work followed the close of his own campaign. (*April 3rd*) "Went by 10 Great Northern train to London. Voted at Guildhall for Herbert Gladstone. Returned by 3 train (to Leeds); sharp work. Went first to Liberal committee-room; then to Music Hall, to an enormous enthusiastic meeting then going on. Ramsden and Fairbairn's last meeting, Barran speaking. I followed him with a rattling speech of thirty-five minutes. After meeting to club, and home by last train." It should be borne in mind that the journey from Burley to London is one of two hundred miles. Down to the very end of the contest he continued to work wherever by vote or speech he could help the Liberal candidates, and at last, when the victory was won, he simply says in his diary (*April 9th*), "Our victory throughout the country astounding." The new House of Commons, in fact, contained 349 Liberals, 243 Conservatives, and 60 Home Rulers, whereas in the 1874 House the num-

bers had been—Conservatives, 351 ; Liberals, 250 ; and Home Rulers, 51.

The remarkable victory, which came as a dramatic surprise to the London press and public, but which had been clearly foreseen by Mr. Forster and other politicians who had taken the trouble to study the movements of public opinion in the provinces, was above everything else a triumph for Mr. Gladstone. His was the name under which the great mass of the Liberal electors fought in the constituencies, and to himself personally fell a signal honour in his double return for Leeds (where he had the enormous majority of thirteen thousand votes), and for Midlothian, where, after a campaign memorable for the energy which the Liberal leader displayed in speech-making, he succeeded in wresting a seat from Lord Dalkeith, the representative of the vast territorial influence of the Duke of Buccleuch. But Mr. Gladstone, though he had unquestionably been the leading figure on the winning side in the great battle, was not the nominal head of the party. The official leaders were Lord Granville and Lord Hartington. When the battle had been fought and won, a brisk controversy arose on the question of whether either of these statesmen or Mr. Gladstone should be Prime Minister. The Queen was abroad at the time when the result of the elections became known, so that the question remained in suspense for some days. What Mr. Forster thought with regard to it will be gathered from the following letter.

To DR. WASHBURN.

“80, Eccleston Square, London, April 21st, 1880.

“MY DEAR DR. WASHBURN,

“I have two letters for which to thank you. The first I had hoped to have answered weeks ago ; but the intense pressure of the election delayed me, and now I have your kind note congratulating us on our success. I always expected to succeed, and was considered too sanguine by almost all my friends. But our majority is far beyond my expectation—a much greater English and Scotch majority than at any time since the first election after the Reform Bill.

“Before receiving this you will have heard who the new Premier is. Beaconsfield has in fact resigned to-day. Nothing is yet known, but I have little doubt that it must and ought to come to Gladstone.

“What I shall do myself I do not as yet know ; but though I expect to have hard engrossing work, it will not prevent my

feeling a continued deep interest in Eastern affairs. . . . Our difficulty is to do our duty in the question, and especially in Asia Minor, without involving ourselves in dangerous and costly complications. I suppose what we ought to aim at is the promotion of concerted pressure on the Turk, whereas Beaconsfield and Layard have in reality made concert more difficult."

On April 22nd the Queen sent for Lord Hartington, and on the following day he and Lord Granville had an audience of her Majesty, which resulted in a commission being given to Mr. Gladstone to form a Ministry.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE IRISH SECRETARYSHIP.

THE post which was offered to Mr. Forster by Mr. Gladstone in the new Administration was that of Chief Secretary for Ireland, with Lord Cowper as Viceroy. It cannot be said that he had coveted this particular office. Full well he knew that, under existing circumstances, it was the position of greatest difficulty in the Government. But public opinion had, by general consent, fixed upon him as the man who was best qualified by his sympathies and administrative capacity to fill it, and when it was offered to him by Mr. Gladstone he at once accepted it, despite the fact that he might reasonably have aspired to a higher place in the official hierarchy. The very fact that, owing to the severe distress which existed in the country as the result of successive bad harvests, and to the agitation which, under the auspices of Mr. Parnell and other Irish representatives, was stirring the tenants of Ireland, the difficulties and risks of the position must necessarily be great, constrained him to make no demur when the Prime Minister pressed it upon him for his acceptance. The popular idea that he sought for this particular post is, however, unfounded. He took it in the spirit of the soldier who is sent to the front by his chief, and he was not without the hope that he might be able to do something towards solving that great problem of the reconciliation of the Irish people to English rule which had so long baffled the efforts of statesmanship.

Nor was there anything unreasonable or presumptuous in this hope. The man who had successfully solved the education problem which had defied the ingenuity of so many English statesmen, was not without justification for the belief that he could do something towards the settlement of this still more difficult and complicated question. He could not do violence, moreover, to the whole bent of his political aspirations. From boyhood certain great questions had always held a command-

ing place in Forster's estimation. Of these the most prominent was that question of slavery, which had absorbed his attention in his opening manhood, and which, in one or other of its many shapes, continued to engage his sympathies and occupy much of his time to his very latest day. Another question that towered above others in his mind was that of education; whilst the third was that of Ireland. He had been blessed, almost beyond his hopes, in being permitted to bring about the realization of his early dreams by the establishment of a national system of education. All that was purest and best in his nature now urged him on to the attempt to do something to brighten the fate of that unhappy country, which he had visited in its hour of extremest need, and towards which all the sympathies of his heart had long been drawn.

Poverty of the bitterest kind weighed upon a great portion of the Irish people. There had been no return, it was true, of the terrible experiences of 1847; but from that year onwards want had been the common lot of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the country. And, by the side of this chronic distress, there had existed a not less chronic disaffection towards the law of the land; a disaffection which showed itself now in agitation against the hardships of the prevailing land system, now in sporadic outbreaks of agrarian crime of the most hideous character, and ever and anon in great popular uprisings against English rule. Distress and disaffection—these were the symptoms of the Irish disease. What were its causes, and how was it to be treated? These were questions which had long engaged the earnest thought of Forster, and it was in the hope of being able, if not to answer them, at all events to contribute something towards their solution, that he accepted the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland in the Administration of 1880.

Writing, before his acceptance of office, to an Irish gentleman who had urged him to take the Chief Secretaryship, he said, "As regards the condition of the country, I much fear you do not overrate the danger. I think, however, you *do* overrate my power of usefulness, and there are strong reasons why, if possible, an Irishman should be appointed. All I can say is, that I should feel my father to be rebuking me from his grave, if I did not do my utmost to prevent personal considerations influencing me in the matter."

There had been specially severe distress in Ireland in the previous year, owing to the bad harvests, and exceptional efforts had been made both by the Government and the people of this country to afford relief to the sufferers. A benevolent

fund had been raised, chiefly through the exertions of the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Lord-Lieutenant, and a Distress Relief Act had been carried by Parliament. This Act empowered the application of three-quarters of a million of the Irish Church Surplus Fund in loans to landlords. Some good had unquestionably been done, both by the private and public efforts thus made to relieve the distress; but it was clear, both from the result of the elections and from the speeches of the popular Irish leaders, that it was not to measures of this kind that the people looked for permanent relief. The unusual distress of 1879 had intensified and aggravated the chronic disaffection, and sixty members had been returned to the new House of Commons who were pledged to do their utmost to put an end to English rule in Ireland by securing for that country some form of self-government.

This was the position of affairs when Mr. Forster entered upon office. The distress among the Irish tenantry was very real, and it was aggravated by the manner in which many landlords exercised their rights, for even the Land Act of 1870 had left some abuses in the system of land tenure. There can be no doubt that not only Forster, but all the members of the new Government felt sincere sympathy with the Irish sufferers. They believed that a portion of that suffering, at all events, was due to faulty laws, and to defects in the manner in which the law was administered, and they hoped that by amendments in the existing statutes where they were necessary, and by an administration of the law at once firm, gentle, and sympathetic, they would be able to do much to bring about a better state of things in Ireland. With the demand of the Irish people for Home Rule no member of the Administration showed any sympathy. It was the conviction of all that to grant any kind of local autonomy to Ireland would be ruinous to the interests of the United Kingdom as a whole. But there was a strong disposition to believe that the Home Rule party would be prepared to co-operate with the Liberals upon most questions of imperial policy, and that by making to Irish demands such concessions as were in themselves equitable and wise, the feeling of the people in favour of Home Rule might be modified if not altogether removed. Such were the hopes entertained by Mr. Forster and his colleagues when they entered upon office at the end of April, 1880. They believed that by showing a real sympathy with the Irish in their distress, by removing any legitimate grievances of which they had to complain, and, above all, by considering

the national susceptibilities of the people, they could establish better relations between the two countries and do much to diminish that hostility to the law which had become so alarmingly conspicuous in Ireland.

That these hopes were destined to meet with a bitter disappointment, and that Mr. Forster's career as Irish Secretary, begun on his own part with a feeling of such warm sympathy with the Irish people, was destined to end in gloom, whilst the goal aimed at still remained unreachd, are facts known to all. The task of the biographer is not, of course, to write the history of Ireland during those trying years, still less to discuss the great problems of Irish policy, but to show how Mr. Forster did his duty, and what were the conditions with which he had to contend whilst he stood at the helm from May, 1880, to May, 1882. The full truth cannot yet, of course, be revealed; but at least enough may be told now to convey to the reader a true impression of the character, the motives, and the achievements of the man who during that period played so conspicuous a part in the history of his country; whilst, as to that part which must still remain untold, all who are acquainted with the facts, all who know what Mr. Forster was, what he suffered, and what he did, will agree in declaring that—

“Whatever record leap to light,
He never shall be shamed.”

Flushed with the brilliant success which they had achieved in the elections, the Liberal party entered upon office, confident that a career of usefulness and prosperity lay before them. Few amongst them seemed to entertain the slightest apprehension as to that Irish question which was destined to assume so grave a character within the next few months. Lord Beaconsfield's defeat had been brought about by the national repudiation of his foreign policy, and, in the first instance, it was of foreign rather than domestic affairs that the new House of Commons was thinking. Hardly had it begun its deliberations, however, before events occurred which showed that the Irish problem was, after all, more urgent than any other. The existing Coercion Act would expire a few weeks after they took office. Their predecessors had not taken the steps necessary to secure its renewal before it lapsed; and one of the first decisions which the Cabinet arrived at was that, in these circumstances, it would try the experiment of governing the country under the ordinary law. This concession to Irish feeling did not suffice to conciliate the Irish members, and some of them attacked the new Government because there

was no allusion to the Irish land question in the Queen's Speech. It was, of course, unreasonable to suppose that a Ministry which had only been a few days in office could be prepared with a measure upon so complex and delicate a subject as that of the tenure of land in Ireland, and this fact was pointed out by Mr. Gladstone in his reply to his assailants. Thereupon the Irish members shifted their ground. It was not a new Irish Land Bill, of a comprehensive character, which they now wanted, they declared, but a temporary measure to stave off the evictions which were threatened upon a large scale, and which had their origin in the inability of the tenantry to pay their rents in consequence of the recent bad harvests. Forster, replying to Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who put forward this proposal, pointed out that it would be almost impossible to bring forward a measure for the suspension of evictions without raising every branch of the land question. Subsequently, in the course of the debate, he stated that, without promising to support such a bill, he would be prepared to give "a fair, full, and considerate hearing" to any proposal which might be made on behalf of the distressed tenantry. The Irish members were not slow to take advantage of this promise. Mr. O'Connor Power forthwith brought in a Bill for the Amendment of the Land Act of 1870, by repealing those portions of the 9th section of the Act which prevented compensation being paid to tenants ejected for non-payment of rent, unless it could be shown that their rents had been exorbitant. In other words, he proposed that the Courts should have power to grant the tenants some compensation for eviction, now that a series of bad years had so seriously diminished their power of meeting their liabilities to the landlords. Mr. Forster, speaking on June 4th, on the second reading of this bill, intimated that "he was not prepared to oppose its principle." He had already become convinced that the condition of the tenantry was serious. Evictions had increased vastly in number and were still increasing, and he saw that grave troubles lay ahead of the Government in Ireland, unless some measure of relief could be at once afforded to the victims of the bad seasons.

Two days before announcing that he could not oppose the principle of Mr. O'Connor Power's bill, he had written to Mr. Gladstone as follows:—

"I think poorly of ——'s judgment, but there is a foundation of truth in what he says. No doubt the hold on the small tenantry by Parnell and Co. is an ignorant hope that they will get rid of rent, and the priests are frightened, finding that they

are losing their influence. On the other hand, the Home Rule members, especially the Parnellites, are behaving better. O'Connor Power's bill is out this morning, and merely provides that ejection for non-payment of rent shall be deemed a disturbance under the Land Act, without prejudice to any rights which the landlord may have under the said act or otherwise, to any deduction from a set-off against the tenant's claim for compensation. This is so moderate that it will not be easy to meet it with a direct negative. . . . I think we ought to lend money freely in Ireland when (1) the security is good, and (2) the works are of undoubted utility; and I think for this purpose the Board of Works in Ireland ought to be recognized and strengthened. This purpose could be more easily attained if we could obtain a real reform of county local government. We ought to obtain (1) a reform of the grand jury system—that is, such county authorities as could initiate works and combine with neighbouring counties; (2) a reorganization of the Irish Board of Works, so as to give it more strength and knowledge."

Four days later (June 6th, 1880) he wrote again to Mr. Gladstone, pointing out the difficulties of the situation in Ireland arising from the distress, the pressure which was being put upon the tenants by the landlords in order to secure either their rents or possession of the holdings, and the increasing agitation among the tenants. Mr. Burke, the permanent Under-Secretary,—a man who was devoted to his duty, not merely as a loyal servant of the Crown, but as a patriotic Irishman anxious to promote the welfare of his fellow-countrymen,—was doing all in his power to prevent evictions; but the landlords were still pressing their claims, and it was evident that the difficulties of those engaged in governing the country were increasing. In these circumstances Forster proposed to Mr. Gladstone that a temporary bill providing compensation for evicted tenants should be brought in, and that at the same time a small but strong commission should be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the Land Act of 1870. It was undoubtedly a grave proposal to make, but the statistics with which he had been provided by the officials in Dublin, and the private reports he had received from Mr. Burke, had convinced him that ministers must step in between the landlords and the tenants if the social system in Ireland was not to receive during the coming winter a shock of almost unprecedented violence. Mr. Gladstone gave his consent to the proposal, and the result was the introduction of the measure for compensating tenants evicted

for non-payment of rent. In the first instance the scheme had no separate existence. It was embodied in a new clause of the Relief of Distress Bill, a measure which had been brought in, in part, to indemnify the authorities for having exceeded their powers in advancing money under the Relief Bill of the previous session, and in part to enable money to be granted for public works and outdoor relief, so that tenants as well as landlords might benefit by this employment of the surplus funds of the Church. No sooner was the new clause added to this bill than it became apparent that it must excite the strongest opposition among the representatives of the landlord interest, and it was eventually withdrawn from the Relief Bill and introduced as a separate measure.

On June 25th the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was proposed for second reading. The argument in its favour was set forth by Mr. Forster in a speech in which he replied to Mr. Chaplin who had undertaken to lead the attack upon the measure. The Irish question was destined to advance so far and so quickly during the next few months that it is hardly necessary to trouble the reader with any detailed recital of the history of this ill-fated measure. The reason for its introduction was the undoubted severity of the distress from which the tenants of Ireland were suffering, and the fact that many landlords were taking advantage of this distress in order to evict their poorer tenants. More than a thousand evictions had taken place in the first six months of 1880. They had occasioned a profound feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the country, and it was clear that if they were to be continued the task of the Government in maintaining order, already difficult, would become well-nigh impossible. This was, in brief, the plea put forward as to the necessity for the introduction of a bill the practical effect of which would have been to suspend evictions for a limited period. It should be borne in mind that whilst the gravity of the situation of the tenants was not seriously disputed by any unbiased authorities, the relief which was to be given to them under the bill was most strictly limited. The measure was only to continue in operation to the end of 1880, and no compensation was to be given to the evicted tenant unless it should appear, first, that he was unable to pay his rent; secondly, that his inability arose not from thriftlessness or idleness, but from the three successive bad harvests from which the country was suffering; thirdly, that he was willing to continue in his tenancy on just and reasonable terms as to rent; and, fourthly, that these terms had been unreasonably refused by his landlord.

Nevertheless the measure was at once assailed most bitterly by the representatives of the landlord class, who saw in it an attack upon the rights of property, and who refused to admit that under any conceivable circumstances would it be justifiable to throw hindrances in the way of the landlord's right to evict. Mr. Plunket saw in the bill a proposal for the direct confiscation of the income of one class in favour of another; Lord Randolph Churchill viewed it as "the first step in a social war, an attempt to raise the masses against the propertied classes;" whilst Mr. Chaplin protested against the whole theory under which a landlord was called upon to compensate a tenant because he refused to continue him in the enjoyment of a privilege which in the first instance had emanated from the landlord himself. On the other hand, the bill was defended with equal spirit and boldness, not only by its author, but by Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington. The Prime Minister declared that in face of the afflicting circumstances prevailing in Ireland this was a bill which, so far from attacking the rights of property, would enable the State with a safe conscience to use the strength at its command in order to maintain those rights. Lord Hartington pointed out that exceptional circumstances had arisen which put it in the power of the landlord, if he was so disposed, to defeat the main purpose of the Act of 1870, and the Compensation for Disturbance Bill had been framed simply in order to prevent the act being thus overridden. The second reading of the measure was carried by a majority of seventy-eight; but when it came forward on the committee stage, Mr. Parnell himself was added to the list of its opponents, the ground upon which he assailed it being an amendment of which the Attorney-General had given notice, to provide against compensation being given to a tenant when the landlord had granted him permission to sell his interest in his holding. From that time forward, although this amendment was subsequently itself amended, the bill received no support from the Home Rule party.

It was, however, duly carried through its remaining stages in the House of Commons, and was read a third time on July 26th. On the 2nd of August, after two nights' debate, it was summarily rejected by the House of Lords by an overwhelming majority.

The blow fell heavily upon Mr. Forster. Better than any other member of the two Houses he was able to estimate the effect which the rejection of the measure was likely to have in Ireland, where the Administration were even now finding themselves placed between the cross-fires of landlordism and

Parnellism. With the aid of such a measure as that which the Peers had rejected so unceremoniously, he believed that it would be possible for the Government to cope with the rising influence of Mr. Parnell and with the growing agitation among the Irish tenantry. But what had now happened increased enormously the difficulties of the situation, and he foresaw that the action taken in the interests of the landlords was likely in the end to injure those very interests in the most serious manner. He took the first opportunity of relieving his mind of the indignation under which he laboured against those whom he now regarded as having made themselves responsible for that stormy winter which he saw before him in Ireland. The Peers had rejected a measure of small importance—a bill intended to assimilate the law of registration in Ireland to that which was in force in England. Mr. Parnell proposed that the measure should be sent up again to them, tacked on to the Appropriation Bill. Ministers, of course, were unable to fall in with the suggestion; but Mr. Forster had an opportunity of speaking out about the conduct of the House of Lords, and he did so with a freedom which excited not a little remark at the time. The Upper Chamber had refused to pass the Irish Registration Bill, not because there was anything objectionable in it, but because it had been sent up to them at a time when it was inconvenient to them to consider it. "This," said Forster, speaking in the House of Commons, "was one of the matters in which especially *noblesse oblige*, and the House of Lords ought not to allege personal inconvenience to prevent bills sent up from that House at any time of the session being thoroughly considered. They could not forget—at any rate, the country could not forget—these two facts: first, the Commons were the hardest worked law-makers in the world; and, secondly, that, on the other hand, probably there was no assembly of law-makers with so much power and so little personal labour as the House of Lords. They must not forget the fact that they were the representatives of the people, and that the power which the Lords had was simply owing to an accident of birth."

This sharp outburst of feeling against the Upper Chamber excited not a little indignation on the part of the Peers themselves; but everybody outside the circle of the peerage felt the justice of the rebuke administered to them. There was, however, a strong and not unfounded belief that Mr. Forster would hardly have employed this vigorous language merely to resent the refusal of the Peers to deal with the Registration of Voters Bill. It was the rejection of the Compensation for

Disturbance Bill which had moved him most deeply. He saw in it the beginning of the worst time the English Government had ever had in Ireland; he believed firmly that the landlord interest in rejecting this measure had inflicted an irremediable wrong upon their own order, whilst they had at the same time afforded the opponents of English rule an excuse for a violent resistance to the law. It was the gravity of the blunder thus committed by the Peers that stirred him with a sense of indignation; and it ought to be said that time did not diminish his feeling upon this point. For the rest of his life he continued to speak with mingled indignation and impatience of the conduct of the House of Lords in throwing out this bill. He was blamed, afterwards, when some people seemed anxious to convict him of wrong-doing in every step which he took, because he did not resign when the Disturbance Bill was thrown out. It would have been strange indeed if he had done so. Every member of the Government shared his feelings regarding the action of the Peers, and if he had withdrawn from his post merely because that action had made his task more difficult, he would really have been deserting his colleagues, and leaving the burden of labour and responsibility which he had shirked, to them. Such a line as this he could never have taken. But when he was viewing the whole question under the sorest feeling of discouragement, he found some comfort in the knowledge that during the next session of Parliament a bill dealing with the whole question of Land Tenure in Ireland would be introduced by Mr. Gladstone himself. In the mean time he determined to struggle on, and to tide over the dark winter which lay before him as best he might in view of the coming legislation.

Very quickly did the first signs of the gravity of the task before him make their appearance. Parliament was prorogued on September 7th, and the Irish orators at once took the field against the Government. Despite the action taken by ministers on the question of compensation for disturbance, and the fact that it was known that they were already preparing a new Land Bill in favour of the tenants, they had not secured the support of Mr. Parnell and his party; and they received no favour from the men for whose sake they had incurred the serious defeat of August 3rd. Unfortunately, too, the modified degree of friendliness which—in memory of his father's and his own labours in Ireland during the famine year—had been shown towards Mr. Forster by the Irish representatives when he first took office, was quickly changed into a directly hostile sentiment. The Chief Secretary, it was soon seen, was trying

to draw towards the Government something of that feeling of enthusiasm which had hitherto only been shown by Irishmen towards the popular national leaders. He did not hesitate to speak out boldly concerning any words or acts on the part of Mr. Parnell or his colleagues, of which he disapproved, and he had even, from the Parnellite point of view, the audacity to appeal from the declarations of the Irish members to the sentiments of the Irish people. It followed that, to a portion at least of the Irish representatives, he was even more obnoxious than his predecessor, Mr. James Lowther, had been.

Soon after the rising of the House Mr. Parnell made his famous speech at Ennis, casting doubts upon the sincerity of the Government in their professed wish to carry a Land Bill in the next session, and advising farmers not to give evidence before the commission which had been appointed to inquire into the question of land tenure. There was something in this speech, however, of much greater importance than any sneers at Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues. This was the advice which the speaker gave to his hearers, to shun any man who had bid for a farm from which a tenant had been evicted. "Shun him in the street, in the shop, in the market-place, even in the place of worship, as if he were a leper of old," was the advice given by Mr. Parnell; and though he probably had no idea of what he was doing at the moment, he was really, when he spoke, placing in the hands of the discontented party in Ireland the most formidable weapon which they could possibly have secured. From the time of that speech dates the beginning of deliberate, merciless, and scientific boycotting in Ireland. This important declaration by the Irish leader concluded with something like a veiled "no rent" proclamation. Its whole tone was one of extreme defiance, not only towards the English executive, but towards the English law.

In other parts of Ireland speeches were made by other prominent Parnellites in which the existing law was criticized and condemned with the utmost freedom, and in which the people were incited to agitate in such a manner as to compel the English Parliament to give them a really acceptable Land Bill. The agitation, however, was not long confined to speeches, however defiant and violent. On September 25th an immense sensation was caused throughout the United Kingdom by the murder of Lord Mountmorres, who was found near his own residence in County Galway with six revolver bullets in his body. The whole of the circumstances attending the crime seemed to aggravate its character, and something very like a

panic set in among those whose chief interest was the maintenance of the rights of landlords in Ireland. Mr. Forster was at once violently assailed on the one hand for not having taken some measures which would have made a crime of this sort impossible, and on the other adjured to see in the assassination of an unfortunate landlord proof of the failure of the existing system in Ireland, and of the necessity for immediately resorting to remedial measures.

Remedial measures were those of which he had thought first when he took office in Ireland, and about which he ever continued to think most earnestly and constantly. But Parliament was not now sitting. His attempt to introduce a remedial measure had been foiled by the House of Lords, and all that could now be done was that which actually was being done—the preparation of the ground for a renewed attempt at remedial legislation in the session of 1881. In the mean time one plain duty was laid upon him. That was the protection of the social fabric in Ireland against those forces which were now threatening to submerge it. God willing, Ireland should have the fullest measure of remedial legislation to which she was entitled; but the party of discontent in the country should not meanwhile be allowed to ride rough-shod over the law or the rights of the orderly section of the community.

Very loud was the outcry raised in the press and on public platforms for the introduction of a measure strengthening the powers of the Executive, so as to enable them to cope with the rising tide of defiant lawlessness. There were, indeed, some who believed that no extension of the powers of the law was needed, and who maintained that all that was wanted was the announcement of the determination of the Government at once to introduce remedial measures. Unfortunately this announcement had already been made, and its effect had been very different from that which was confidently anticipated by those men who objected to any renewal of coercion. Boycotting, which had now received its recognized name owing to the remarkable case of Captain Boycott, was daily becoming more rife. The Land League had established courts of its own for the trial of land cases, and these courts, wielding the tremendous weapon of boycotting, were able at their will to inflict the severest penalties upon those who fell under their ban. Outrages upon cattle, attempts at assassination, "moon-lighting," the sending of threatening letters, and all other forms of agrarian crime were on the increase, whilst the tone of the Land League leaders became daily more openly and aggressively defiant.

To have met this state of things, not by any attempt to vindicate the authority of the law, but by the simple concession of all that the League was demanding on the part of the tenantry, would have been justly regarded as tantamount to a surrender on the part of the Government to the forces of disorder. There was no thought of such a surrender on the part of Mr. Forster. But there was one grave question to be considered, and that was in what manner the Executive should assert itself. Men were already clamouring on all sides for an autumn session, and for the hurried passing of a new Coercion Bill. That it must come to that in the end seemed only too probable to Forster; but he required to be satisfied on one point also. He would not agree to any alteration of the existing law until that law had received a fair trial, and its applicability to the existing system had been tested by a prosecution of some of the leaders in the agitation.

MR. FORSTER *to* MR. GLADSTONE.

“Dublin Castle, October 8th, 1880.

“Parnell and company have clever law-advisers of their own. It is not easy even to find technical proof of the connection of any one of them with the Land League, and the Land League has hardly any written rules, and publishes no list of officers. The speeches are, in fact, almost the only evidence, and these are framed as carefully to keep within the law as they are to tempt others to break it. I trust, however, that I shall have the opinion [of the law-officers of the Crown on the question of prosecuting Mr. Parnell and others] not later than Sunday next. . . . My expectation is that the opinion will show us (1) that we have the strongest moral grounds for a prosecution; (2) that we have doubtful legal ground; (3) that we cannot expect a conviction.

“If such turn out to be the opinion, I still think we ought to prosecute; but I must beg you to turn the *pros* and *cons* over in your own mind.

“The *pros* are—

“(1) We shall be doing almost the only thing we can do without fresh legislation; (2) we should be trying to punish men who, without doubt, are great criminals and mischievous criminals; (3) we should prove to every one that we do not fear the agitators; (4) we should make it clear that we are not in league with them. So great is the excitement, that there are many who say, and even some persons, not ill-disposed, who think, that we are not sorry for the outrages, as

making a strong Land Bill necessary. (5) We should also make it clear that we did not mean to let Parnell's law be put in place of *the* law—every one, law-breakers included, would feel that having taken up the gauntlet he throws down, we should have to ask for further powers, if present powers did not suffice.

“The *cons* are—

“(1) Great enthusiasm would be excited for Parnell; subscriptions would flow in from America; (2) the quarrel between the Land Leaguers and the Nationalists would be healed; but I do not think the quarrel helps us now; (3) some of the more moderate Home Rulers would be tempted or driven to join him; (4) he would probably obtain the triumph of no conviction. I fear the best we can expect, from even a Dublin jury, is disagreement instead of acquittal; (5) I fear no trial is possible before January, probably not till Easter. Nevertheless, if the law-officers give us ground to think that we have a case which would carry with it reasonable public opinion, I am for prosecution. I am, however, by no means sure that prosecution will stop, or even materially check the outrages. No one can say. Parnell has incited to these outrages; but they may now be beyond his control. If within his control, it is reasonable to hope he would, for his own sake, do his best to stop them pending his trial. The outrages continue and spread from one county to another. I believe that if we cannot prosecute we shall be driven to a special session for suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*; and even if we do prosecute we may also have to do this; but at any rate we should be able to tell Parliament that we had done what we could with our present powers.

“Yesterday a very large deputation of landlords came to Lord Cowper and myself—more than sixty from all parts of Ireland, but chiefly from the disturbed districts. They were in a state of great but suppressed excitement, moderate in their language, but with difficulty. They very much confined themselves to giving their reasons for alarm, and calling upon us to give them protection. Administratively, I think we are doing all we can—have proclaimed Mayo and Galway, and asked military authorities to fill barracks in these counties. I hope Spencer will come here next Monday. He comes on education business, but his counsel will be most useful, especially his opinion of the present position as compared with that which obliged the Westmeath Act.”

MR. GLADSTONE to MR. FORSTER.

"Downing Street, October 9th, 1880.

"I do not see why legislation should mean, necessarily, only suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*. We are now, I believe, inquiring whether the law allows, under certain circumstances, of combinations to prevent the performance of certain duties, and the enjoyment of certain rights. If it does not, as I understand the matter, we prosecute. If it does, why may not the law be brought up to the proper point by an amending Act?"

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

"Dublin Castle, October 10th, 1880.

"My remark in my last note about the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* meant this: that, as before, so now, we may find that nothing will check the actual outrages but arrest and detention of men on suspicion. When the whole population sympathizes with the man who commits an outrage, he knows that hardly any witness will give evidence against him, and that a jury in his own district will certainly acquit him. On the other hand, this suspension is a most violent, I may almost say, a brutal, remedy, and before trying it we must be sure it is the only remedy."

The "concert of Europe" for the purpose of completing the settlement of the Eastern question was at that time, it may be noted, occupying the chief place in Mr. Gladstone's thoughts, and for the moment the question of an extension of the powers of the law was allowed to drop. It was soon, however, revived. In the mean time (October 23rd) it was announced that it had been resolved to prosecute fourteen of the Land League leaders, among whom were Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Biggar, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Patrick Egan, Mr. Thomas Brennan, Mr. P. J. Sheridan, and Mr. J. W. Walsh. The charge against them was one of conspiracy to prevent the payment of rent, and to defeat legal processes for the enforcement of rent, to prevent the letting of farms from which tenants had been evicted, and to create ill-will between different classes of her Majesty's subjects.

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

“Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,
“October 25th, 1880.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“On the 1st inst. Burke sent to the country inspectors of police queries to which we are now receiving answers.

“I have the answers for Connaught and Munster, and I think them so important that I send them you, though in uncorrected proof. In looking over them, please bear in mind that the disorder which has existed for months in Connaught is now taking hold of Kerry and Cork.

“The last two or three days, there has been some diminution in outrages. This may, and I hope is, in some measure owing to the announcement of the prosecutions, but I fear it is quite as much owing to the Land League getting their way, and therefore not needing outrages.

“The first week after the prosecutions have actually begun, that is the first week or ten days in November, will test our position. Unless we see a real improvement, then I am most reluctantly driven to the conviction that we cannot face the winter—that is, January and February—without special legislation; and if special legislation at all, we cannot conceal from ourselves that it must be special legislation in the most high-handed fashion. I do not believe any bill would be of real use short of suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*. It would have to be a much stronger bill than the Westmeath Act, because we could neither limit it to a confined area, nor to suspected members of any society. It must, in fact, give power to the Irish Executive to shut up any person they consider dangerous. It will require the strongest possible case to justify such action, but unless matters mend, I fear it will be our hard fate to have to take it.

“When Parliament meets, should we accompany our coercive measure by any counter-bill like the Disturbance Bill? I said, quite late in the session, that if we brought in a Coercion Bill in the autumn, and if we had reason to believe that the landlords were behaving badly, we should accompany it by a counter-bill. This statement, which was made during your illness, but with Hartington’s concurrence, and, indeed, at his suggestion, was much cavilled at by the Tories, and would be much used by the Parnellites, if we bring in a Coercion Bill by itself; but as yet my second condition has not been fulfilled. At present, with few exceptions, the landlords are behaving

well. . . . My present position is not enviable. Panic-struck landlords and landladies besetting one with letters and interviews; and the worst of it is that I cannot deny that in many cases there is ground for panic. I do not know that we can do more than we are doing.

“(1) Hurrying on the prosecutions as fast as possible.

“(2) Proceeding against actual outrages in the provinces whenever we can.

“(3) Cramming the worst counties with police and military.

“You will see that Kerry and Cork ask for police. We are meeting this request; but the urgency has only now come on. I am, however, getting to the end of my police. By proclaiming counties we can increase the number beyond the parliamentary strength; but, it takes time to make a policeman. They used to think six months, but in the urgency we are sending recruits to peaceable districts in a shorter time, and we are getting some fresh men.

“Only one word more. Our Land Bill, when it comes, must be strong and comprehensive. We had better do nothing than tinker. I do not wish to be dogmatic, but that is what I think.”

A few days later Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Forster asking for information regarding the condition of the country, of which he might make use at the 9th of November banquet to ministers at the Guildhall. Public excitement on the subject was growing daily, and in many quarters it was aggravated by rumours which were beginning to spread of divisions among ministers on the question of coercion, and of the resolve of certain members of the Government not upon any consideration to consent to any extension of the powers of the law until the effects of remedial legislation had first been tried.

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

“Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Phoenix Park,
“November 8th, 1880.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I have your letters of the 5th and 7th inst. First as to statistics—as to *outrages*. I shall have ready for Cabinet the fullest details since 1844.

“October is, as I have said, very bad—266 outrages against 167 September; 110 October, 1879; 20 October, 1878. More than the outrages throughout the whole of the six years before

1878. I said in one of my last letters that I hoped the outrages were diminishing in atrocity. I do not think it would be safe to say this. I am not *sure* of the fact—and while we have eighty men under personal protection, we are only preventing murder by the police surveillance.

“*Evictions.*—When I get to the Castle to-day, I hope to send you some figures, but I do not think it will be safe to say much about evictions. There are very few now—only in Ulster. The landlords fear to evict. Parnell is quite right (in *Freeman's Journal* which I send) in saying that the League has stopped evictions, though he ought to have said, ‘the League and its attendant outrages.’

“As regards the immediate question, viz. the suspension of the H. C. Act, it is impossible for any one to dislike it more than I do. On public grounds, I both fear and hate it, probably as much as you, and privately I hardly need say that no man could have a more disagreeable task—one more certain to involve him in discredit—than would be my fate if I have to bring it forward. But I doubt if in any other way we can keep peace and protect life and prevent anarchy. All my questions I have asked myself, and I think I shall be prepared with answers more or less clear. I do not think the Westmeath danger can be compared to the present, though it was easier to deal with. I cannot look with hope to the alternative course of special legislation against the Land League combination. The Parliamentary opposition would, I think, be even stronger. The Irish obstructives would oppose both equally, and the English Radicals would consider their rights threatened.

“But I do not think it would do the job. Besides, it would hardly be possible to bring in such a bill before we knew the result of the prosecutions, and we may not be able to wait for that result. The present outrages, or rather that condition of the country which produces the outrages, is owing to the action of the Land League, but I believe that now these outrages are very much beyond its control.

“The actual perpetrators and planners are old Fenians or old Ribbon-men or *mauvais sujets*. They would shrink into their holes if a few were arrested. Only we want men. What I meant about making a strong Land Bill depend on cessation of outrage was this:—Any bill which will be worth bringing in must give the tenant class much of what they ask: if it be given while the outrages prevail, it will be generally said and thought that it has been exacted by the outrages. The upshot will, I fear, be that its opponents would, on that account, be

able to prevent its passing, and even if passed it will be a temptation to fresh outrage. I think we must first get temporary quiet.

“P.S. . . . To-day we have had a most difficult and dangerous matter to deal with. We obtained information that large bodies of armed men were going from the north to Captain Boycott’s farm, one hundred in one body, and two hundred more from Belfast. This would be civil war. We knew the whole country-side would be up against them. We sent down to Boycott’s district to-night five hundred infantry, and three squadrons of cavalry, and we tell Boycott that we will do what we have always promised to do, and, in fact, urged him to enable us to do, viz. protect to his farm, and away from his farm, and at his farm, as many men as are necessary for the *bona fide* work on his farm. But we have warned the organizers of the movement that any force of armed men above such number will be an illegal gathering, and must be treated as such. I hope by this means we shall stave off a fight, but if we do not stop outrages we must expect lynch law.”

Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at the Guildhall, naturally did not take so gloomy a view of the situation as that which was taken by Mr. Forster when writing in the confidence of official life to his chief; but he made it clear that ministers were resolved, to the best of their ability, to fulfil the obligation under which they lay for the maintenance of the law. This speech for the moment silenced the rumours of dissensions within the Cabinet. But they broke out with renewed violence when the Cabinet meetings began to be held in the week following the banquet. Nor were they at all vague in their character. On the contrary, they were precise and circumstantial. It was said that Mr. Forster, having come back from Ireland convinced of the necessity for the adoption of strong powers, if the authority of the Government was to be maintained, had been opposed in the most vehement manner by some of his colleagues, and it was virtually intimated that when the final decision was made either Mr. Forster or his opponents would have to leave the Government. Everybody knows now that the difficulty was solved without any need for breaking up the Cabinet. From this fact it might be inferred that there was no foundation for the rumours so generally current at the time; but such an inference would be wholly erroneous. Mr. Forster, armed with the official knowledge he had acquired in his position as Chief Secretary, felt

strongly that additional powers must be conferred upon the Executive to enable it successfully to cope with the alarming and ever-increasing disorder in Ireland. He was opposed by other members of the Ministry, and a long and bitter struggle took place. It was not until November 27th that the question was settled, and then it was only settled by a concession on the part of Mr. Forster. It was announced that Parliament would be summoned, not on December 2nd, as Forster had desired, but on January 6th, and nothing was said about any intention to introduce a Coercion Bill when the Houses met. Whilst the solution of the ministerial difficulty was still unattained, however, a very interesting series of letters passed between Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone.

MR. GLADSTONE to MR. FORSTER.

“Downing Street, November 16th, 1880.

“What you said to me last evening, before leaving the Cabinet room, much impressed my mind. . . . You said most judiciously, on a former day, that if we are to ask for a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* it ought to be on a case of great strength and clearness. But do these figures, after all the allowance to be made for ‘protection,’ indicate *such* a case? As far as I can judge, there is a tendency in Ireland, upon a series of years, to a decline in the total number of homicides. The immense increase in property offences (agrarian) for 1880 seems to me to mark the true character of the crisis and the true source of the mischief, viz. the Land League. But I incline to assume that any suspension of H. C. must be founded on danger to life.”

Mr. Forster, acknowledging the letter, pointed out that, whilst it was true that the crimes against life were not so serious as they had been at some former times, it was necessary to bear in mind the existence of a system of general terrorism exercised by means of personal outrage.

In his speech at the Guildhall, Mr. Gladstone had intimated that the time had not yet come when ministers were satisfied of the necessity for a reinforcement of the law. On November 18th he wrote to Mr. Forster, calling his attention to this speech, and asking what new facts had arisen to establish the case in favour of coercion, which he had then said had not been made out.

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

“ 80, Eecleston Square, London,
“ November 18th, 1880.

“ MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“ I think the fair interpretation of your Guildhall speech is that, upon demonstration of inefficiency of present power to protect life and property, you would ask for increase of power. The fair inference is that you had not at that moment the demonstration; but I think another fair inference would be that, spoken at the time that speech was, you awaited the facts which the Irish Government would bring before you when the Cabinets began. Undoubtedly, if these facts do not afford to your mind the demonstration, you are not hampered by your speech. In one respect your speech is very strong,—obligation incumbent on us to protect *every* citizen in the enjoyment of his life and *property*. I have this morning the eviction returns for the last six weeks. I send the summary herewith. The total is 82, against 671 for the previous three months; and for the disturbed provinces—viz. Munster 2, Connaught 21, against 335. This confirms more than I expected my belief—

“ 1st. That the outrages are not caused at present by the evictions.

“ 2nd. That Parnell can claim the credit of stopping evictions.

“ The Land League teaching realized, *i.e.* outrages and the fear of outrages, have done that much.”

The struggle within the Cabinet had been maintained up to this point with unflinching determination on both sides, and there seemed a strong possibility that the Ministry would be wrecked owing to the refusal of ministers who had no official connection with Ireland to allow the man responsible for the peace of the country the means which he and his advisers deemed necessary to enable him to maintain that peace. The following letter explains how the difficulty was at last solved—temporarily, at all events.

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

“ Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,
“ November 23rd, 1880.

“ DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“ I find little change in the situation. Every week extends the area of the agitation, and makes the inability of the Government to give protection more clear. My own

opinion is unchanged—that it is our duty to summon Parliament without delay, and to ask them for further powers. I do not think that those of my colleagues who are opposed to this step have realized to themselves the demoralization consequent upon the Executive allowing itself to be successfully defied. This would be bad enough in any country, but it is hard to estimate its danger with such a people as the Irish.

“I believe that by waiting till January we shall not only increase our administrative difficulties, but diminish our power of dealing successfully with the land question. It is, however, needless for me to reiterate my arguments in this direction. I suppose I must consider that —— and —— have made up their minds, and I have therefore to determine what, under the circumstances, is my duty.

“If I insist further on Parliament meeting on December 2nd for despatch of business, I suppose one of two results must happen—either —— and —— will leave the Cabinet, or I shall have to do so myself, with or without those who agree with me. Independently of other considerations, which, of course, I do not forget, and looking at the question, as it is my business to do, as regards the government of Ireland, I am well aware that Irish difficulties must be greatly increased by either of these results.

“To put the matter briefly and plainly, it is in the power of —— and —— to compel me either to increase Irish difficulties by a break-up of the Cabinet, or to continue my work here—hard enough under any circumstances—in a way which I disapprove.

“I have come to the conclusion that I must take the last alternative, throwing the responsibility upon my colleagues, especially upon those of them who, as it were, force me to do so; and I therefore am willing to try to get on with present powers till early in January, but I cannot undertake to do so longer.

“No one will rejoice so much as myself if it turns out that my conviction that matters will become worse this month is a mistake; but I find that my fears are shared by every responsible person here, especially by Law, though he, like myself, has been driven with the utmost reluctance to take the side of coercion.”

There can be no doubt that the course which Mr. Forster thus declared his willingness to take, in the interests of the Government of Ireland, was one which was personally distasteful to him. But he felt compelled to do his utmost to avoid

the breaking-up of the Administration. He did so, knowing only too well that a very short interval of time would justify his opinion as to the state of Ireland, and would compel those who had opposed him in this matter to acknowledge that he was in the right, whilst they were in the wrong. In acknowledging the receipt of his letter of November 23rd, Mr. Gladstone, writing on the following day, said, "As I said on Saturday that no candid man could ascribe your previous conduct to obstinacy, so I am sure all will admit that in most difficult circumstances you have now, as you did then, acted in the best light of your judgment and conscience." A consciousness that this was indeed the case helped to sustain Forster under the trying circumstances of the moment; but both he and his colleagues were soon called upon to feel that grievous injury had been wrought in Ireland by the refusal to allow him to demand additional powers for the Irish Government at the date which he originally fixed. Meanwhile he was left to struggle on without any powers save those conferred by the ordinary law, and this in spite of the terrible increase of outrages and the almost unchallenged supremacy of the Land League as the real governing body throughout a large part of the country. What he could do without extraordinary means he did. He obtained a considerable reinforcement of the troops in Ireland, and he issued a circular to the magistrates drawing their attention to the powers which they already possessed under the law, and impressing upon them the necessity for firmness and vigilance in the application of these powers.

It must not be supposed that during all this period of anxiety and uncertainty Forster's thoughts were wholly occupied with the question of restoring the supremacy of the law. He did believe most emphatically that it would be a mistake to introduce a sweeping Land Bill until the authority of the Government had been vindicated; but all the time he was keenly alive to any cases of exceptional distress, and to any methods for relieving that distress which did not involve an apparent surrender on the part of the law to the lawless. During the summer and autumn of 1880 he was in constant correspondence with his old friend, Mr. James Tuke, and gave all the aid in his power to the beneficent labours of that gentleman in the congested and poverty-stricken districts of Ireland, whether they took the shape of gifts of seed and potatoes for planting or of aid in emigration.

To MR. TUKE.

“September 2nd, 1880.

“MY DEAR TUKE,

“Sir John Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Canada, and Sir A. Galt, the Canadian representative in this country, are coming to dine with me to-morrow, to talk confidentially over the possibilities of Irish emigration. Can you meet them? Dinner at 7.30. You would help us in our discussion, and become known to them, which might be well, as they return to Canada at once. I shall be glad to give you a letter to Thornton, our minister at Washington.

“Yours ever,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

The result of the meeting between Mr. Tuke and the two Canadian statesmen, which was thus arranged by Mr. Forster, was the starting of the Manitoba emigration scheme.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PROTECTION ACT.

THE month of December found Mr. Forster contending against difficulties in Ireland which were well-nigh overwhelming, and at the same time labouring under the necessity of submitting in England to reproaches which were wholly unmerited. The Tory party, under the leadership of Lord Salisbury, united in denouncing his management of Irish affairs, because of the feebleness and cowardice which seemed to them to characterize it. Every trouble in which the authorities at Dublin Castle had become involved had its origin, according to Lord Salisbury, in the cowardly action of the Government in evading the elementary duty of preserving order. These were the charges to which Mr. Forster had to submit from his opponents, whilst, on the other hand, he found some of his own colleagues in the Cabinet strenuously opposing his application for increased powers, and consequently weakening his position both in the Government and in the opinion of the country.

But mere taunts and misrepresentations were matters of small moment compared with the state of things which was now prevailing in Ireland. Boycotting had grown with the suddenness of Jonah's gourd, and was now a weapon of the most formidable kind—all the more formidable because it could not be touched under the ordinary law. The use of this method of political warfare was cruel in the extreme. The boycotted man or woman became, as Mr. Parnell had expressed it, as a leper. He or she was shunned everywhere. The butcher and the baker had to refuse the custom of the victim, on pain of suffering ruin themselves. His farm was deserted by the labourers who had grown old in his service, and his crops left to rot in the fields; the very servants of his household turned and fled from his abode as from a city of destruction, and all domestic duties had to be discharged by

his wife or his daughters. If he went to the neighbouring market in the hope of selling his stock, he was shunned by everybody, and had to return home conscious of the failure of his errand. If he and his family ventured to go to church on Sunday, seeking in the ministrations of religion some assuagement of the bitterness of their lot, the whole congregation, on seeing them enter, would rise as with one accord, and leave them alone in the building. Verily as lepers they were treated, so far as all social or business or religious intercourse with their fellow-creatures was concerned.

It must be borne in mind that it was not the well-to-do, or those who were somewhat raised in the social scale, who alone suffered from this social ostracism. The poorest and most helpless of labourers who had sinned against the unwritten law, small shopkeepers, servants, both men and women—all who fell under the ban of the League had to pay the penalty. Nor did their hardships end with their exclusion from all the pleasures of social life. By day and by night they were pursued by an enemy—invisible, but none the less formidable on that account—who added to their other sufferings the ever-present dread of a sudden and violent death. In the dead of night, unseen hands would dig a grave in the very garden-walk in front of the boycotted man's door; in broad daylight, masked villains would show themselves behind the hedges which lined the road by which he or his wife or children travelled; and morning by morning the postman brought the threatening letters, ornamented with rude sketches of coffins, skeletons, and daggers, which served to keep the victim's nerves ever upon the rack. His cattle, too, would be found dead from hideous injuries inflicted by men who must have had the hearts of fiends, in the fields or the stalls, and his stacks would be destroyed by fire. Worst of all was the fact that he had to suffer this unrelenting, cruel, and almost demoniacal form of persecution without daring to hope for sympathy, much less for assistance, from any of his neighbours or friends. Nay, if at last the assassin's bullet struck home, and the hapless wretch was found pouring forth his life's blood by the roadside, no neighbour, even though connected with him by ties of blood, would consent to go to his assistance. He was absolutely under the ban of those who then held the ruling power in Ireland, and his one chance of assistance was that which was afforded to him by the brave and faithful men forming that remarkable body, the Royal Irish Constabulary.

This was the state of things which weighed most heavily

upon Mr. Forster during the terrible autumn and winter months of 1880. He was denied the use of any weapons save those of the common law, for the purpose of combating the terrible and remorseless system of persecution of which so many persons were now the victims. All that he could do was to spare no pains in order to afford some measure of help and protection, and to encourage them to the utmost of his power, by the strong sympathy which he showed with them in their sufferings, and by the moral strength with which he sought to brace them to their struggle with the forces of the League. It was heartbreaking work, however, and it did far more than any differences with his colleagues, any attacks on the part of political associates whom he had once trusted, to torture his heart and add "the years that are not Time's" to his age. Every day's post brought its burden of pain to be borne. The very sensitiveness of his nature, his strong love of animals, his hatred of brutality and violence, increased his sufferings. The outrages which were of such constant occurrence did not come to him in the form of cut and dried returns—mere recitals of the number of cases of cattle-maiming, moonlighting, or threats to murder. Each individual sufferer seemed anxious to pour his own story with all its ghastly details into the Chief Secretary's ear, and much of Forster's time and attention was taken up by the recital of the hideous crimes against which, without some enlargement of the powers of the law, he knew that it was impossible for any one in his position to contend successfully. The details of these crimes mean little now, and it is needless to weave the harrowing story into the narrative of Mr. Forster's life; yet one or two letters, taken at random from those which accumulated upon him at this season, may be read with profit. The first is from a magistrate dealing with the state of the country.

[*Private.*]

"November 13th, 1880.

"DEAR SIR,

"As a magistrate for Limerick, Tipperary, and the Queen's Counties, perhaps as popular as an agent and landlord as any man in Ireland, mixing daily with the people, I deem it my painful duty to inform you that I have never known the country to be in such a state. The idea amongst the tenant-farmers is that, as Mr. Gladstone disestablished the Irish Church, so he will the landlords, if they persist by violence in fighting him into it. Being in Limerick for the

last ten days, I was present at the meeting held there and in Newcastle, and never have I heard such language; and when the Rev. Mr. ——— prayed that 'England might be blotted out of the list of nations,' the cheers were loud. Indeed, at every meeting the hatred seems to be intensified.

"Many tenants told me that if they paid their full rents they would be murdered. Some asked for false receipts, and some paid and got none at all. I was told the names of several local gentlemen *whose warrants were signed*, and riding out in the evening near R——, a well-dressed man asked me for the love of God not to be out in the dark, and, going down on one knee, said, 'You see, sir, I honour you next God, and go back.' The police are no longer in the confidence of the people. They know very little, but I think they all know that *something secret* is going on. From the hints I am led to believe it is help from America. Not being in the least an alarmist, and, having the welfare of the people at heart, sympathizing with the Government in making those great changes that may be required in accordance with law and order, I am led to believe that unless the Government suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and get the Irish militia out of the country before March 17th, you will have a general out-raise and many lives lost. I would rather you took no notice of this by letter, as if it was known that I gave any information my life would be attempted."

Among the gentlemen upon whose lives attempts were made was a clergyman, from whose wife Mr. Forster received the following letter:—

"December 27th, 1880.

"SIR,

"Before this reaches you, you will in all probability have received an account of the attempted assassination of my husband, a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, and a loyal man to his God and his Queen. Mr. Forster, you are a Christian man and a gentleman, and I ask you how you and your colleagues can reconcile it to your conscience that, owing to the weak Government of Ireland, a clergyman who reads God's Word, and secs there 'Go preach the gospel to every creature,' and who tries humbly and faithfully to obey his Lord's commandments, is to be made the mark for the assassin's bullet, and that only through the good Providence of that God he tries to serve, I am not this day a mourning widow and his nine children orphans? The cartridge paper of the Enfield rifle, sold by a paternal Government to rebels,

has been picked up on the spot, and the marks are plain where three assassins lay in wait. England spent millions of money and thousands of lives to rescue one missionary from the Abyssinian king, but that was a great and grand proceeding, and the world rang with the praises of England's courage and generosity. Here at home, men of the same blood, of the same faith, living within sixty miles of that same brave England, cannot drive to the Church consecrated to the service of the same God England professes to serve, without risking their lives. For weeks past I have waited every Sunday evening for the news which came last night, that an *unarmed* man was fired at within six yards' distance, and within a quarter of a mile of his own door on the public high-road. You may hold yourself guiltless of the blood that is steeping our unhappy land, but we do not hold you guiltless; neither does *He* who rules over us all. The criminal weakness which armed a superstitious and excitable people, and then turned them loose on innocent men, will surely draw down Heaven's vengeance on that England which Protestant Ireland once loved. When will you feel for those living in constant dread and exposed to perpetual attack? Nine months ago, in my husband's absence, when I was alone with only my helpless children in the house, our stackyard was fired, and nothing but our Lord's protecting hand then saved our house and lives. The 'message of peace' Mr. Gladstone has sent us is the murderer's bullet and the midnight torch."

Exaggerated in its vehemence and unfair in its accusations as this letter undoubtedly is, it is nevertheless worthy of being printed here for two reasons; first, because of the light which it throws upon the state of feeling in the disturbed districts at that period, and, secondly, because it is merely a sample of many such letters which were poured in upon Mr. Forster by those who considered him responsible for all that was then happening in Ireland, and who laid upon his head the offences of the Ministry as a whole. Other letters, however, more pleasant in their character occasionally reached him. Thus, at Christmas, 1880, he was addressed by an Irish lady who was an entire stranger to him as follows:—

"December 22nd, 1880.

"MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,

"At this Christmas-time, when you have so much trouble and anxiety caused you by my poor country, and when you have so many hard and undeserved words to bear

from those whom you are trying to save, I feel impelled as an Irishwoman to tell you that, deep down in many, many of our hearts, we feel intense gratitude to you, and great admiration for the manly bravery you display and the patience with which you bear our waywardness. You and Mr. Gladstone—God bless you both!—feel for the suffering of our people, and while you deplore and blame their wrong-doings, you are like our great Master, pitiful to the sinners, knowing that they err through ignorance and know not what they do. . . . I earnestly pray that you may see the fruit of your labours; but, even if not, I earnestly, warmly, and truly thank you in my own name and that of thousands, for all you have done and are trying to do for us. I write this not for an answer, which I do not want; but because you hear so many hard words both in England and Ireland, I want you to know there are many faithful hearts beating for you, and who feel the great honour of having a man so truly honest, earnest, and unselfish working for them and their country's good."

Forster was engaged during the Christmas holidays in preparing the Protection Bill which he had wished to introduce at the beginning of December, and the necessity for which was now generally acknowledged.

MR. FORSTER *to* MR. GLADSTONE.

"Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,
"December 26th, 1880.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"On Thursday I shall bring before the Cabinet my draft Coercion, or, as it may be called, Protection Bill. I am obliged to have it drawn up here, but upon the agreement of the Cabinet as to principles, both I and our draughtsmen will be most glad to get Thring's help as to words and arrangements. I am very anxious not to insist upon more than is absolutely necessary, but I am unable to see that we can get on without the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Failing in evidence is the chief and, to my mind, the sufficing cause of our failure to protect, and nothing will enable us to give protection but the temporary power to imprison without evidence. . . . I think we must have the arms clauses of the last act. They are very long and too numerous, and I should be very glad if we could have a mere clause of renewal, but in May the Cabinet did not think this possible. . . . Christmas is over—certainly not a merry one, but not altogether an unhappy one, because, after all, we are doing what we can. I

am very grateful to you for your help to me this past year, I only wish I may be able to help you in next year, but I feel it is my hard lot to bring you nothing but anxieties."

MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

" Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park,
" December 28th, 1880.

" MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

" I enclose outrage statistics for November. At bottom I give them for the first thirteen days, and also for October. I am sorry to say they show a large and progressive increase, especially in maiming cattle and firing into dwellings—the worst forms of intimidation. There is not, I think, much in ———'s getting his full rent—in Mayo, by-the-by, not Connemara. The question is not whether some landlords do not by luck or merit or management get their rents, but whether a large number do not. . . .

" I really believe I am doing everything that can be done by our present powers. . . .

" Leaving the outrages and turning to the Land Bill, the current still sets in favour of the three F's.

" I send you a memorial brought me yesterday, and signed by all the unofficial Liberal Ulster M.P.'s—that is, all but Law,—and they tell me that nothing short of this will keep their constituents from joining the Land League. . . .

" You mention a fresh Government valuation. The arguments for it are evident. Against it are—the delay: could it be made under three years? The unpopularity: it would mean in many cases a rise of rent and its responsibility. A Government valuation at this moment would be looked upon as a Government attempt to fix the rent of every farm in the neighbourhood. I think it would fix it as against the landlord, though not against the tenant.

" Is there not much to be said for (1) taking present rents for the basis as much as possible; (2) giving time and temptation to landlord and tenant to make their own bargain? I think they would generally do this if they knew that an arbitration court was in reserve.

" ——— writes to me that there is much to be said for giving the tenant practical security rather than theoretical fixity. True for the Cabinet, but for Ireland we must not forget that we have to deal with the imaginations and hopes of an excited people.

" Excuse this long scrawl.

" Yours very truly,
" W. E. FORSTER."

Within a fortnight of the date of the above letter (January 7th, 1881) the session began, and it was announced in the Queen's Speech that the "additional powers necessary not only for the vindication of law and public order, but for the protection of life, property, and personal liberty of action" would immediately be asked for. The Irish legislation of the session went beyond this proposed renewal of coercion, however. A measure developing the principles of the Irish Land Act of 1870, and another establishing a system of county government in Ireland, founded upon representative principles, were also promised.

On the day on which Parliament met, Mr. Forster took the earliest opportunity which presented itself of giving notice that he would on the following evening move for leave to bring in a bill for the better protection of persons and property in Ireland, and another to amend the law relating to the carrying and possession of arms. Feeling both in Parliament and the country was strongly excited, and when Mr. Parnell, amid loud expressions of dissent, had given notice of his intention to oppose both of these bills, a statement from Mr. Gladstone that he would move that they should have precedence of all other business was received with ringing cheers. It was quite evident that, for the moment at all events, public feeling regarding Irish lawlessness was not in a state in which it could be trifled with. A hot debate on the proceedings in Ireland during the recess at once began. In the course of his speech Mr. Forster mentioned the fact that five counties had been proclaimed during the autumn, and that the number of outrages up to the end of December had been 2573, of which 1327 were cases of threatening letters, whilst 153 persons were at that time under special police protection.

The beginning of the long running fight between Forster and Mr. Parnell as the chief representative of the Land League may be dated from this night's debate. Mr. Parnell had spoken defending the action of the League, and Mr. Forster retorted that the meetings of that body had constantly been followed by outrages, and that the object of the League leaders was not to bring about an alteration in the land law by constitutional means, but to prevent any payment of rent save such as might be made in accordance with the "unwritten law" of Mr. Parnell. He did not charge Mr. Parnell with having himself incited to the outrages which had followed the meetings at which he had appeared, but he held that he must have known very well what would be the result of his speeches and his action. It was clearly the desire of Mr. Forster to

fasten upon the Parliamentary leader of the Irish party a personal responsibility for the action of that party as a whole. He had convinced himself not only of the close connection between the League meetings and the outrages which almost invariably followed them, but of the tacit acquiescence of the League leaders in the acts of the outrage-mongers. Hitherto all the most prominent Parnellites had carefully abstained from denouncing outrage, and had rarely if ever said a word in deprecation of those violent threats against the landlords which were constantly being uttered at public meetings in their hearing. It was Forster's object, if possible, to drive Mr. Parnell and his colleagues out of this position of stolid reserve, and to compel them to declare themselves frankly and honestly on either one side or the other—either as the open enemies of violence and crime, or as the active accomplices of the outrage-mongers. He believed that whatever choice Mr. Parnell and his party might make, decided action on their part must benefit enormously the party of law and order in Ireland.

Mr. Parnell, it need hardly be said, did not see matters in the same light as Forster, and he was clearly greatly irritated by the attempts of the Chief Secretary to make him take his stand either for outrages or against them. Forster had never, since he took the office he now held, been able to count upon any kind of support, or even of fair consideration, from Mr. Parnell, who opposed him alike when he was pressing forward the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in the interests of the tenants, and when he was attacking the outrage-mongers in the interests of the public at large. It was not, however, until Mr. Parnell was thus directly challenged that he became Forster's bitter and unrelenting foe. From that time forward all the forces commanded by the Irish party in the House of Commons were directed against Mr. Forster, and every species of personal attack which malignity could devise and ingenuity execute was made upon the Irish Secretary.

It is unnecessary here to repeat the history of the session of 1881, though I shall have occasion to refer to not a few incidents in that session as I proceed. The reader must understand, however, that from the day on which the Houses met, until that on which they separated, Forster had to submit to nightly attacks, insults, and calumnies of every conceivable and inconceivable description, whilst the Irish members laboured unceasingly to create among their English colleagues a belief that no matter who might be chosen to replace Mr. Forster he could not possibly be a person so completely un-

acceptable to the representatives of Ireland as Forster was. The manœuvre is a stale one now; and men look with comparative indifference upon that personal abuse of Irish Secretaries by the Irish representatives which is apparently part of the reward which the former must expect for the faithful performance of their duty. But it was new to the House of Commons when Mr. Forster was first made the victim of it. It is to be feared that there were many members who did not very clearly realize the true motives of Mr. Parnell and his friends, in waging such bitter personal war against Mr. Forster, and who believed that, after all, it must be due to some personal defects of his own, rather than to the peculiarity of the position which he held as the representative of English rule in a country profoundly disaffected, but enjoying parliamentary representation, that he owed the uncompromising hostility of the Irish members. At all events it is certain that such hostility was infinitely more formidable in the days when it was first directed against Mr. Forster than it has ever been since.

Whilst the Irish question was being fiercely debated on the address in the House of Commons, and Mr. Forster was being assailed on the one side by Lord Randolph Churchill for having allowed Mr. Parnell and his co-defenders in the State prosecutions to be sent before an unpacked jury, as well as for the anxiety he showed to restrain the police from any violent action, and on the other hand by Mr. Parnell on precisely opposite grounds, Forster himself was busied with the details of the new land measure. The bill itself had been undertaken by Mr. Gladstone, but it was, of course, inevitable that Forster should be consulted in every stage of its preparation. Necessity compelled him to assume the ungracious part in connection with the Irish legislation of the year, and to appear chiefly as the author and administrator of a new Coercion Act, whilst to Mr. Gladstone fell the happier lot of being associated with a great remedial measure. But as a matter of fact, Forster's interest in the new Land Bill was as keen as that of Mr. Gladstone himself, and it was to the result of the passing of that measure, rather than to any addition to the powers of the Executive, that he chiefly looked for an improvement in the condition of Ireland.

From MR. FORSTER to MR. GLADSTONE.

"Irish Office, Great Queen Street, S.W.,
"January 10th, 1881.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I cannot help telling you that I believe the feeling for the three F's in Ireland prevails even more than I had supposed. If there was now an election, I believe there would not be ten Irish members returned who would not go for that or something stronger. . . . We must oppose the Irish members in the protection bills, because we cannot otherwise do our duty as an administration; but it is another matter opposing the overwhelming Irish feeling on the most important subject of legislation."

A few days later we find him writing to Mr. Gladstone to suggest means by which the landlords might be prevented from taking advantage of the Protection Act in order to carry out evictions before the passing of the Land Act. At the very time when he was anxiously discussing this point with the Prime Minister, some of the Irish members were charging him with having brought forward the Protection Bill for the real purpose of helping the landlords to recover their arrears of unjust rents. Immediately after the close of the debate on the address, during which eleven nights were occupied, chiefly in the discussion of Irish questions, the Protection Bills were brought forward by Mr. Forster. The shape which they finally assumed was somewhat different from that simple suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act which had first commended itself to him.

In prefacing his description of the provisions of the first of the two measures he had to propose, Mr. Forster gave some facts regarding the condition of Ireland. During the previous year the number of agrarian crimes had, he said, exceeded by six hundred the total of any single year since 1844, despite the fact that in the interval the population had decreased from eight to five millions. Even setting aside the sending of threatening letters, there had been in 1880, 1253 outrages, two-thirds of which had been committed in the last three months of the year. Abandoning mere statistics, Forster drew from materials which had accumulated upon him only too rapidly during the winter a picture of the condition of the country which was terrible in its character. Incendiary fires, moonlighting, cardings, torture of cattle, attempts at assassination—these, as he showed, were the penalties inflicted upon all

who were known to have disobeyed the unwritten law of the Land League, whose rule was now supreme throughout the greater part of Ireland. "In Ireland," he said, "the Land League law is supreme, and there is a real reign of terror over the whole country. No man dares take a farm from which another man has been ejected, nor work for a man who pays his rent, or who refuses to join the Land League. . . . The fact is that those who defy the existing law are safe, while those who keep it—the honest men, in short—are in danger. After all, all law rests on the power to punish its infraction. There being no such power in Ireland at the present time, I am forced to acknowledge that to a great extent the ordinary law is powerless; but the unwritten law is powerful because punishment is sure to follow its infraction. Take away this power to punish for infraction of the unwritten law, and it will become an empty form. The men who have planned and perpetrated the outrages to which I have referred are the men without whose help the speeches of the honourable members for the city of Cork, Tipperary, and Cavan would be merely harmless exhortations and vapouring. It is these men who have struck terror into the heart of the districts in which their operations have been carried on, and we must strike terror into them in order that outrage may be stopped, person and property may be protected, and liberty may be secured. We must arrest these criminals. We cannot do it now because they have made themselves safe by the enormity of their crimes and the power which those crimes have enabled them to acquire. They know that they would be perfectly foolish to fear the law when no man dares to appear and give evidence against them. Do the police know the names of these village tyrants? Of course the police know them, and they themselves are perfectly aware of the fact. These men may, I think, be divided into three categories. There are, first, those who remain of the old Ribbon and other secret societies of former days; in the second place, there are a large number of Fenians, who have taken advantage of the present state of affairs, not so much caring about the land as in order to promote their own particular views in regard to the political situation in Ireland; and, in the third, there are a large number of men who are the *mauvais sujets* of their neighbourhood. So it not unfrequently happens that the most powerful man in a particular district is a contemptible, dissolute ruffian and blackguard, who, his character being known by all his neighbours, is shunned by them all, but who nevertheless acts as the powerful and active policeman for the

execution of the unwritten law. To what, then, are we driven? Simply to this—to take power to arrest these men and keep them in prison in order they may be prevented from tyrannizing over their neighbours.”

When Forster drew that picture of the condition of Ireland, which made so profound an impression upon all who heard it, he had in his mind, not those masses of figures which were all that he could lay before the House, but the details of numberless cases of individual suffering, and of the malignant cruelty of those who were seeking to make themselves the agents and ministers of the unwritten law, which had been brought before his attention whilst in Dublin. He knew, too, that many of the victims of that “reign of terror” of which he spoke, ignorant of the course he had taken in the Cabinet, laid upon him the responsibility for their sufferings, and increased the weight upon his mind by the reproaches with which they assailed him, in the mistaken belief that he had turned a deaf ear to their cry for help. Only those who knew him best could appreciate the extent to which he felt the miseries and cruelties inflicted upon people whose one offence was that they had dared to remain true to the law of the land, or could understand his own bitter sense of impotence when he was left to contend with the adversary with no weapons save those of the common law. Yet those who wish to get a picture of Forster’s mind on the day when he stood up in the House of Commons to confess that there was a real reign of terror over the whole of the country, and that the law was powerless to reach the offenders, must endeavour to realize these things.

The provisions of the Protection Bill were simple enough in themselves. They empowered the Lord Lieutenant to issue a warrant for the arrest of any person whom he might reasonably suspect of treasonable practices or agrarian offences, and to detain such person as an unconvicted prisoner for a period not to extend beyond September 30th, 1882.

It was in the closing passage of the speech in which Forster explained the provisions of the bill, that he said, with a depth of emphasis that struck home to every heart, “This has been to me a most painful duty. I never expected that I should have to discharge it. If I had thought that this duty would devolve upon the Irish Secretary, I would never have held the office. If I could have foreseen that this would be the result of twenty years of Parliamentary life, I would have left Parliament rather than have undertaken it. But I never was more clear than I am now that it is my duty; I never was

more clear that the man responsible, as I am, for the administration of the government of Ireland, ought no longer to have any part or share in any government which does not fulfil its first duty—the protection of person and property and the security of liberty.”

Historically important as were many of the incidents of the debate upon the bill which had thus been laid before Parliament, the limits of this narrative can only permit of a brief allusion to them. Mr. Parnell was absent from London, attending his trial at Dublin, when the bill was first brought in. There were many of his colleagues, however, who were able and willing to fill his place in leading the opposition to the bill. The most strenuous efforts were made on the part of Irish members for the purpose of obstructing the measure as much as possible. They began by resisting the motion for its introduction, and they appealed to English members to give them their support. The appeal was practically without result, for the Radical members of the House agreed with the Whigs and the Conservatives in admitting the strength of the case which had been made out on behalf of an amendment of the law, and were inclined upon the whole to regard the proposed measure with favour. The Irish members were thus left to themselves in opposing it.

There can be no doubt of the tenacity and courage with which they did their work. Twice during the debates upon the motion for leave to bring in the bill were the sittings of the House extended to an abnormal length. On the first occasion a memorable incident was the return of Mr. Parnell in the midst of an all-night sitting from his trial at Dublin, where the disagreement of the jury had brought the proceedings—as Mr. Forster from the first had anticipated would be the case—to an abortive end. On the second occasion the House sat for forty-one and a half hours—from Monday afternoon until Wednesday morning, and the sitting was only terminated in the end by the courageous action of the Speaker in putting the question on his own responsibility—a step which led eventually to a great change in Parliamentary procedure, and to the adoption of the closure. In the first instance, the one change made was the adoption, on Mr. Gladstone's motion, of a rule for expediting the progress of public business which had been declared “urgent.” Before this proposed rule could be discussed, an extraordinary scene, due to the extreme excitement and passion of the Irish members, occurred in the House. It began in an explosion of anger, on the part of Mr. Dillon, at the announcement that

Mr. Michael Davitt, once a Fenian convict, and now an active agitator on behalf of the Land League, had been arrested and sent back to prison under his ticket-of-leave. Mr. Dillon, declining to submit to the ruling of the chair, was suspended. Mr. Parnell, attempting to prevent Mr. Gladstone from speaking on the subject of his proposed new rule, after repeated warnings met with the same fate as Mr. Dillon, and eventually thirty-six other Irish members in all, who had refused to obey the chair, were in turn named to the House and suspended. It was only after this scene of excitement that Mr. Gladstone was enabled to propose the new rules for expediting urgent business.

The chief object of these regulations was, of course, to enable the majority of the House to cope with Irish obstruction, especially with the obstruction which was directed against such a measure as the Protection Bill. On February 4th, the second reading of the bill was moved by Mr. Forster, the first stage of the measure having occupied five days. On the fourth day of the debate on the second reading, the resolution was carried, and eventually, after the promulgation by the Speaker of stringent rules for expediting the business, the measure passed through its last stages in the House of Commons on February 24th, twenty-two nights, in all, having been spent in discussing it. On March 2nd it received the Royal assent, and at once became law.

The Protection Act was followed by the Arms Bill, which, after full discussion in the House of Commons, also became law on March 21st.

It was inevitable that, during the heated debates upon the measure, Mr. Forster should come in for no small share of abuse from the Irish representatives and their English allies. They charged him with being more anxious to crush the national liberties under the heel of a tyrant than to afford any relief to the victims of bad laws and an oppressive land system. The Irish newspapers delighted to apply to him, as a name of opprobrium, the epithet "Buckshot"—founded upon the mistaken idea that he had ordered the use of buckshot by the police when they had occasion to fire upon a crowd; and one English member went so far as to speak of him in the House of Commons as "the English Robespierre," and to declare that he was no more fitted than the French revolutionist to be entrusted with the liberties of a people. At the time when he was thus being held up to the hatred of the Irish race he was constantly taking counsel with Mr. Tuke and other active friends of the suffering tenantry, as to the

means of relieving the distress where it was specially severe, and was going far beyond the duties of his high office in his personal efforts to afford help to the starving cottiers of the west. "If I saw my way to a special fund" (for seed potatoes) "of £5000," he writes to Mr. Tuke in February, 1881, "I would gladly give £100; and I do not doubt that England would give." And on the day on which the Royal assent was given to the Protection Act, he wrote to his wife, not making any mention of the measure over the triumph of which he was supposed to be gloating, but telling her that he had just seen a certain firm about "the Belmullet people," and had arranged for their seed. "The £1100 will do the job, and I believe it will save the whole district." "I never felt so happy about any gift of money," he writes to Mr. Tuke (March 8th, 1881), "I believe we shall simply save these poor Erris men, who have behaved very well, and refrained from outrage."

It was during this time also, when party passions were beginning to run high, and Forster found himself engaged in a struggle as severe as that in which any minister of our century has been involved, that he found time to write to an old family servant as follows.

To MARY ROWLAND.

"80, Eccleston Square, London,
"January 2nd, 1881.

"How *very* kind of you to give me and work for me that beautiful handkerchief! I hope and trust you are really better, for I fear you have had much suffering, and it has been a real sorrow to me as well as to my wife to hear of it. Well, you have one comfort, and a great comfort too; you have tried through life, and on the whole very successfully, to do your duty, and to make better those with whom you have had to do. I wish you could make my Irish friends and foes do likewise. The New Year comes upon me with a great prospect of work. You kindly wish me less hard work than last year. I do not expect this, but I have a hopeful trust it will not be such grievously unpleasant work.

"Yours very affectionately,
"W. E. FORSTER."

The Irish Land Bill was the chief legislative work of the session of 1881. Forster's share in it was not a small one, but it must be noticed here very briefly. He had looked

forward to this bill with the utmost hope from the moment when he took office. In his memorandum addressed to the Cabinet in May, 1880, on the question of the renewal of the Crimes Act, he spoke of the necessity for "a strong Land Bill" as being that which was paramount in connection with Irish affairs; and all through the autumn of that year, as well as in the spring of 1881, when he was pushing forward the Protection Bill and the Arms Bill, much of his time and thought were given to that remedial legislation in the efficacy of which he had so large a faith. It will have been seen from some of his letters to Mr. Gladstone that he was convinced that no measure which did not embody the three F's had a chance of succeeding, and in his various official memoranda on the subject, whilst the bill was under preparation, he dwelt strongly upon the importance of its being made "strong" in the sense of being, as far as possible, comprehensive and complete. He did not agree with the original draft of the Land Bill as sketched by Mr. Gladstone, and he was strongly in favour, not only of fixity of tenure at a fair rent with freedom of sale, but of effectual measures to prevent the overcrowding of certain districts in Donegal, Kerry, Cork, and Connaught.

Whilst the Land Bill was slowly and amid many difficulties making its way through the House of Commons, Mr. Forster was facing the situation in Ireland. The work thrown upon him at this time was of almost incredible severity, and would undoubtedly have broken down the strength of most men. But Forster's wonderful power of bearing fatigue, and his capacity of keeping his faculties on the full stretch for a long period at a time, stood him in good stead now. He went backwards and forwards between Dublin and London, almost living in railway carriages. He felt that his chief place must of necessity be in Dublin, where he was charged with the employment of special powers for the administration of which he had made himself personally responsible. So every week he went over to Ireland to spend a day or two in consultation with Mr. Burke and the Castle authorities. But the Cabinet, when the Land Bill was passing through the crucible, and the House of Commons, whose members on all sides—Conservatives, Liberals, and Parnellites—were impatient for information or eager to attack the acts of the Irish Executive, also demanded his attention. It was well for him that in his business life, in his electioneering episodes, and in other phases of his experience he had learned to keep his head cool under strongly exciting circumstances. He was enabled now to retain

his calmness and self-possession in the midst of a racket which would have overthrown the equanimity of most men. It may be doubted if any, either of his predecessors or his successors in the office of Chief Secretary, had to pass through such an experience of work and excitement as that which he had to encounter from the beginning of 1881 down to May, 1882. It must be borne in mind that, during practically the whole of his tenure of office as Secretary for Ireland, he was the only person connected with the Irish Administration who had a seat in the Cabinet. Nominally the subordinate, he was in reality the superior of the Lord-Lieutenant, whilst he had not the advantage of having a Cabinet colleague in the Chancellor. But there were graver reasons than the mere pressure of his work, both in the House of Commons and at Dublin, which now caused him serious anxiety.

The passing of the Protection Act had been succeeded by a lull in the progress of the outrages in Ireland. Mr. Michael Davitt had been arrested in February, before the Act was passed, and there had been an outburst of indignation on the part of the Irish people at the arrest of one whose sincerity of purpose was generally acknowledged; nor was the feeling lessened by the fact that Davitt, being a Fenian convict on ticket-of-leave, had been sent back by the Home Secretary without trial to the rigours of penal servitude. Even the announcement that he was being treated with great leniency in prison hardly served to mitigate the bitterness of the national party in Ireland at his arrest. This incident apart, however, nothing of serious consequence happened in Ireland until a few weeks after the passing of the Protection Act. Mr. Parnell and his colleagues in the House of Commons, indeed, affected to defy it and treat it with contempt. But among the Irish people it was evident that there was a feeling of apprehension, and they waited in silence to see in what manner it was to be applied.

The general belief, both in Ireland and in England, was that the framing of the measure would be followed by wholesale arrests throughout the country, and morning after morning people turned to their newspapers expecting to read of a *coup-d'état* which had led to the annihilation of the party of outrage in Ireland. Forster, however, had given his pledge in Parliament that he would personally supervise the execution of the Act which had practically invested him with despotic powers over the liberties of the Irish, and, strange to say of one who had been compared by a fellow-member in the House of Commons to Robespierre, he took a strict and conscientious

view of this pledge. It would be ridiculous—even in presence of the slanders so freely hurled against him by the leaders of the Irish party—to defend him against the charge of having a delight in the use of the powers with which he was now invested. Nothing so utterly abhorrent to him had ever occurred in the course of his political career, as the need for obtaining these powers from Parliament. In his inmost heart he was not without a hope that, now that he had been formally invested with them, he would be relieved from the necessity of making use of them. But in any case he was determined to carry out, both in the letter and in the spirit, the pledge which he had given to Parliament as to the manner in which he would administer the Act.

Wholesale arrests might—probably would—have struck terror into the hearts of many of the enemies of the law, and from the strategical point of view those who complained regarding the failure to employ the Act in this way were not without grounds for doing so. But how could arrests be effected wholesale when Mr. Forster had undertaken to inquire personally into every case, and to see that the Act was administered with the utmost possible regard for the common rights of the Irish people? So the opportunity, such as it was, of “striking a blow”—the favourite resort, be it said, of men whose only resource is brute force—was deliberately allowed to pass, in order that the extraordinary powers created by the Protection Act might be employed with the strictest regard for the rights of individuals, and for the pledges given when the Act was being discussed in Parliament, that was consistent with the circumstances.

And here a word must be said regarding a charge which during the heated years of Mr. Forster’s Chief Secretaryship was not infrequently brought against him, and more than once by men who, it might well have been expected, would have refused to soil their hands by making use of such an accusation as a means of attacking an opponent. That is the charge that he used his authority under the Protection Act in order to arrest his political opponents, not because there was reason to suspect them of having committed any of the offences against which the Act was named, but merely because they *were* his political opponents. It seems strange to one who knew Mr. Forster in private as well as in public, and who knows that, whatever might be his bluntness of manner, such a feeling as personal malice never found a place in his breast, to have to defend him from an accusation so malignant as this. Forster had many enemies in public life. No man could have

won the great place which he had secured before his death without incurring animosities and resentments, no matter how honourable and straightforward his own conduct might have been. And, alas! in this world no man can dare to flatter himself that he is not the object of the jealous hatred of rivals, who either see that he has already outstripped them, or imagine that he stands in the way of their own advancement. Forster shared the common lot. But never during the present writer's intercourse with him, did he hear one word of bitterness or animosity fall from his lips with regard to those who had shown something more active than mere political enmity in their dealings with him. He was invariably, in private conversation, generous and gentle in his allusions to his rivals and his foes. No word was ever uttered by him which showed that the evil passion of jealousy had possession of his breast. It is strange, I repeat, that I should have to defend such a man from the charge of having violated the law—for if the charge had been true, such would have been his offence—in order that he might avenge himself upon his political opponents in Ireland. To those who knew him the accusation must have seemed utterly absurd. When it was put forward in his lifetime he denied it with warmth and emphasis, and defied his assailants to adduce even the shadow of proof of their assertions. The charge has been repeated since his death, but from first to last those who have made it have failed to bring forward evidence in support of a statement which can only be branded as a malicious and mendacious calumny.

But to return to the course of events in Ireland. Very quickly the Irish people discovered that Mr. Forster had not promised that which he was not prepared to perform, when he undertook himself to superintend the administration of the Protection Act. The Executive, after having secured these powers, proceeded very much as they had done before. No sudden swoop upon the centres of lawlessness was made by the authorities; but here and there, where a strong case of suspicion was proved to exist against some notorious agitator or outrage-monger, he was quietly arrested upon a Castle warrant and conveyed to Kilmainham Prison. The outrage-mongers and their friends recovered speedily from the fright occasioned by the passing of the Act. If this was the manner in which it was to be employed, they felt that there was nothing very formidable in it. So outrages again began to mount up, there were constant collisions between the bailiffs or process-servers and the public, whilst the leading members

of the Land League went up and down Ireland, proclaiming their contempt for the Act and their defiance of the Government. One painful feature of the situation was the fact that the League meetings, whenever they were held, seemed to be followed by a track of crime.

The first distinct aggravation of the situation, after the passing of the Protection Act, occurred at the end of March. At a place called Clogher, a fatal conflict took place between the police, who were protecting a process-server, and the mob. A policeman was killed by the crowd, and the constables, firing in self-defence, killed two peasants. Mr. Dillon, reading the telegram announcing this affray in the House of Commons, declared that the blood which had been shed was upon the heads of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, and that the curses of the children of the slain men would follow them. It was not imputed to them even by Mr. Dillon that they were in any special degree responsible for the collision between the police and the people. Their offence, from the Land League point of view, was to be found in the fact that they had not insisted upon passing a bill for suspending evictions until the new Land Bill had been carried. Another fatal conflict between the police and the public followed the affair at Clogher. Forster hastened over to Dublin in order that he might be upon the spot, leaving to his colleagues the management of Irish affairs in Parliament. The effect produced by the Protection Act when it was first passed was manifestly fading away. The shape which the Land Act would finally take was still unknown; there were differences on the subject between himself and his colleagues. Meanwhile the Irish leaders and people showed no disposition to be grateful, or even patient, in view of the prospective advantages of the measure. More than ever he deplored the conduct of the House of Lords in rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill of the previous session, and thus paving the way to the existing situation. He could not abandon his post whilst the battle was in full progress, but to those nearest to him he made it clear that this task of governing a people by means of a Coercion Act was intensely distasteful, and he entertained some hope of being able, after the passing of the Land Act, to retire from the Chief Secretaryship.

One of the results of the fatal collisions between the police and the public was a series of speeches from prominent members of the Land League of such a character that it was impossible for the Executive to ignore them without allowing the Queen's authority to be brought into open contempt.

A strong measure was resolved upon—the arrest of Mr. Dillon.

One great cause of disappointment to Forster at this time was the apparent inability of the police to discover and arrest persons who might be “reasonably suspected” of being concerned in outrages. When he brought in the Protection Bill he had stated that the police assured him that they knew the outrage-mongers, and that, provided they were allowed to arrest them on suspicion, they would soon be able to clear the country. These were practically the representations which had been made to him. But, to his disappointment, serious outrages took place without being followed by any arrests. The police, in fact, found themselves at fault, and to Forster’s chagrin were unable to make that full use of the powers conferred upon them by the act which had been anticipated. He did what he could in the shape of urging increased care and vigilance upon the constabulary, and especially impressing upon them the importance of acting promptly after an outrage had been committed. The effect of an arrest following immediately upon a riot or an outrage was, he felt, immeasurably greater than its effect would be if it were deferred until people had almost forgotten the occasion of it. The fact that Forster discovered thus early that the Protection Act did not, after all, give him the full power he had hoped to obtain from it, is too important to be passed over at this point in the narrative. He hoped, however, that matters would improve and that such measures as the arrest of Mr. Dillon would satisfy the people of Ireland that ministers were thoroughly in earnest.

Mr. Dillon was arrested in the beginning of May, and a great sensation was produced by the incident throughout the country; for John Dillon was unquestionably not only one of the ablest and most earnest, but one of the most popular of the Irish leaders. It was a strange fate which compelled Mr. Forster, the man who in 1848 had offered to find a shelter for John Dillon the elder, then a fugitive from justice, to issue a warrant for the arrest of John Dillon the younger. But his duty was an imperative one, and he discharged it without flinching. Not that he failed to do justice to the good qualities of Mr. Dillon. Standing behind the Speaker’s chair one day in the early part of this session of 1881, whilst Mr. Dillon was launching out in the most violent manner against the Irish Government, Forster turned to a friend beside him and said, “That poor fellow is the most honest of them all; but I am afraid he will be the first of them I shall have to lock up.”

The punishment, however, which was involved in imprisonment under the Protection Act was altogether different in its character from that which is ordinarily suffered by prisoners. Forster was anxious, above everything else, to abstain from dealing with his "suspects" as though they were convicted criminals. It was necessary that they should be held in detention—some because they were reasonably suspected of having been engaged in the commission of outrages and in other criminal acts, others because their speeches had the effect of inciting those who heard them to resistance to the law. But no criminal taint was allowed to attach to the man who was held in detention under the powers of the Protection Act. He was treated far better than a first-class misdemeanant in an ordinary gaol. He was not degraded by having menial tasks imposed upon him. He wore his own clothes; he could, if he pleased, provide his own food; he read books and newspapers; he received his friends in prison; he associated with his fellow-captives. This was the manner in which Forster dealt with the prisoners whom he made under the Protection Act.

The penalty imposed upon them was the lightest consistent with their actual detention in gaol. And even the prison doors were opened to them when good reason could be shown for temporarily liberating them. Some were allowed to go home on parole, to see a sick wife or child, others to attend the funeral of father or mother. At the moment when the shrillest cries of passion and hatred were being raised against the Chief Secretary, who held in his hands the keys of Kilmainham, Forster was devoting hours daily to the task of making sure that the imprisonment of the suspects was not merely humane, but even gentle, and entirely free from any trace of cruelty or vindictiveness. Before me lie the grateful letters of a father whose son had been released from gaol in order that he might attend his mother's funeral; of a mother on a sick-bed who thanked Mr. Forster for allowing her to see her son; and of others who, amid all the slander and calumny that was current throughout the country, had their own personal reasons for knowing that the heart of Mr. Forster was a tender one, and that his ear was never closed against an appeal to his sense of justice or his pity. Such was the system of imprisonment carried out under his *régime* in Ireland. Great differences of opinion, I know, exist as to the best method of dealing with a people who have to be governed against their own consent. I cannot discuss the question here. Mr. Forster's method must stand or fall upon its own merits. It was the method of combining firmness with gentleness.

In giving some account of the dark and stormy months of his sojourn at the Chief Secretary's Lodge in Phoenix Park, I am chiefly indebted to a diary kept with great care and accuracy by his daughter, Mrs. Vere O'Brien. On May 8th, she notes, "Father read to us Mr. Robinson's report of the reception of the seed potatoes in County Mayo. This has been an altogether delightful incident, and it was a pleasure to hear the Chief Secretary reading anything so different from an outrage report. 'I wonder whether they would call me Buckshot Forster, if I went down there?' pondered father."

For some time before this the police had been entertaining grave apprehensions as to Forster's personal safety. From various quarters they had received hints of the existence of a secret society which was not agrarian, but political in its character, and the object of which was to "remove" by assassination those statesmen and political leaders who were supposed to be obstacles to the attainment of the desires of the Irish people. The first man to be thus dealt with was known to be Forster, and there was naturally great anxiety on the part of the authorities as to his safety. Forster himself was altogether free from this anxiety. To the courage of a brave Englishman was apparently united a certain degree of fatalism. He had his duty to perform, and whatever came to him in that plain path must be right. The religious sentiment, too, which was always so real and strong in his heart, whatever might be his intellectual attitude towards Churches and creeds, sustained him with a sense of the divine presence and protection. Thus upheld, he had no liking for the precautions for his safety which were constantly being taken by the police. In Ireland the matter was very much in his own hands, and he was thus enabled to get rid of the escort which the authorities at Dublin Castle were so anxious to force upon him. The case was different in England, where the supreme authority in the matter was the Home Secretary. It happened that in the month of May Forster went down to Yorkshire to address a meeting at Bradford. To his annoyance he found, on reaching his peaceful home at Burley, that a large body of police had been quartered in the village, and that both his house and his person were "under protection" to such an extent that his own partner, Mr. Fison, was stopped in the grounds at Wharfeside when on the way to call upon him after dinner. This was more than he was prepared to submit to, and he sent a message to the chief constable of the riding, bluntly telling him that there was to be no repetition of these precautions when he came down again to Yorkshire, as upon the whole he would prefer to be shot.

Things continued to go badly during this month of May in Ireland. Outrages were frequent, and each fell upon Forster like a personal blow. The coarse insults to which he had to submit whenever he showed himself in the House of Commons, and some of which were almost incredibly gross and brutal in their character, were mere trifles compared with the constant occurrence of cases in which farmers who had dared to pay their rents, or labourers who had ventured to continue to serve boycotted persons, were subjected to the most cruel outrages by criminals whose identity could not be discovered. It was disheartening in the extreme to continue the arrests of suspected persons, and to find that all the arrests had no substantial effect upon the returns of outrages. Then, towards the end of May, there was fresh trouble, owing to the surreptitious publication in the Nationalist newspapers in Ireland of a confidential circular to the police. It necessitated his return to Dublin from the House of Commons, where he had been meeting the Irish members face to face, and watching the progress of the Land Bill. A grave question was to be dealt with, and it could only be effectually dealt with at the Castle. It was how to warn the people that henceforward any assembly for the purpose of obstructing the officers of the law in the execution of their duty would be dispersed, if necessary, by force.

The "assemblies" which were thus to be dealt with were not meetings, but were the riotous mobs which appeared upon the scene whenever the process-servers were going about their hateful work under the protection of the police. Hitherto the police had shown the most admirable self-command under grievous provocation. But Forster, though he did everything possible to encourage them in this display of patience and forbearance, felt that there were limits beyond which the endurance of flesh and blood must fail, and, knowing that in the last resort force must be used, he was anxious to give fair and full warning to the people, before that point had been reached.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Dublin Castle, May 27th, 1881.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I find myself unable to return to London to-night, and I am not sure that I shall be able to do so on Monday, in which case it will not be worth while to return before Whitsuntide. As you have got into committee on the

bill, I am very anxious to get back; but, on the other hand, administration here requires constant attendance, and it is very difficult to direct on details from London.

“The struggle to repress lawlessness is very severe, but I have more hope of success than when I first came over. There are districts—especially parts of Limerick—which are in the most dangerous excitement. I still hope to make the writs run without bloodshed; but it is very difficult, and the magistrates have to possess a rare combination of firmness and forbearance. The insults to the police are almost past bearing—for instance, many hundreds of men and women yelling like savages, throwing dirt, spitting in their faces, for hours. This, of course, they bear; but when stones are thrown, actually endangering life, it is hard to keep them quiet. On the other hand, firing probably means many men and some women killed, and an almost certain verdict of wilful murder against the men, if they fire without orders, though in defence of their lives, and against the resident magistrate if he gives the order to fire.

“On the other hand, thanks to our arrests, the outrages throughout the country are certainly diminishing, and more rents are being paid. As regards the evictions at present, the large majority of them are perfectly just, but though the increase already is great, I expect a very much larger increase of decrees next month, unless we can devise some arbitration or mediatory clause.

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“The Castle, Dublin, May 29th, 1881.

“DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I am much obliged to you for your note. I am sorry to say I think I must stay here over Whitsuntide. I am clear I am more wanted here for the next fortnight than in London. There is one especial matter which I hardly dare to leave uncontrolled, or to attempt to control by telegrams from London.

“It is clear that we cannot allow a repetition of what took place last Saturday week in Co. Limerick. Not merely must the sheriff and his officers be protected, but an obstructing, stone-throwing mob must be dispersed. Further legal processes must be carried out within a few days, and, if let alone, the mob will be much larger and more dangerous than before.

I am taking steps to send an overpowering force of soldiers and police, and I intend at the same time to have a proclamation posted throughout the district, warning people that an assembly to obstruct the law is unlawful, will be dispersed, and that they will attend it at their peril. I hope by this means to assert the law without bloodshed, but it is a ticklish business, needing constant watching.

"As regards McCarthy's motion, I cannot speak again. If it gets again into a real debate, . . . a few words from you, or, in your absence, from Hartington, will be useful, as of course there is a great effort here to separate me from the Government."

This allusion to Mr. McCarthy's motion, and the attempts which were being made to separate Forster from his colleagues, had reference to a resolution directly censuring the Irish Executive of which Mr. McCarthy had given notice, and for which eventually only twenty-two members voted, and to the growing practice of Mr. Parnell and his followers of alleging the existence of a party within the Cabinet which was opposed to Coercion and to Mr. Forster's method of governing in Ireland.

The proclamation warning persons who assembled for the purpose of obstructing the execution of the law that they would be dispersed by force was duly issued, and Forster awaited the result. So far as he himself was concerned, he believed that it would lead to a verdict of wilful murder being returned against himself, whenever any one was shot by the police.

"I am doing three things," he writes to one of his colleagues (June 4th). "Arresting all those central and local leaders of the Land League who can be reasonably suspected of incitements to violence, and I think these arrests are telling; (2) letting the sub-sheriffs and landlords know that they must tell us what protection they want, and when and where, thereby preventing them from being masters of the situation; (3) giving the people to understand that, if they drive us to it, we must fire on them. I think by striking blow after blow every day I may make the law prevail; but it is a hard job, and if there be a relaxation of action when I am back, not much good will follow."

He was feeling the weight of the struggle now, and it was telling upon his spirits. This employment of soldiers and police for the purpose of securing the rights of individuals and the supremacy of the law, necessary though he felt it to be,

was certainly not to his taste. Not to do such work as this was it that he had accepted the Irish Secretaryship, and his sensitive nature was deeply wounded at the thought that this should be the end of all his labours for Ireland. His mind reverted frequently to the idea of resignation. "Again this evening (June 12th) father reverted to the possibility of his resignation," writes his daughter in her diary. "'It is seriously to be thought of whether, after the Land Bill is passed, I should not get out of it all. The Cabinet would make arrangements for me. *I can never do now what I might have done in Ireland.*'" I have underlined one passage in this sentence, because it furnishes the key to that wish of his to retire from his post which I have mentioned. It was because the hope of benefiting Ireland in the way which seemed best to him had vanished, and not because of the difficulties and annoyances of the office he held, that he was anxious to be released. He saw clearly enough that Fate had driven him into a line of action which effectually barred the door to the realization of his own personal hopes and aspirations as regarded Ireland. To other men might come the happiness of being able to sow the seeds of peace and goodwill between Irishmen and Englishmen. To his lot it had fallen to have to maintain the cause of law and order in days of the most critical danger and anxiety; and in doing his duty as the minister of the Crown, he knew that he was at the same time putting an end to all possibility of the accomplishment of the work which he had long hoped that he might achieve in Ireland. This knowledge was very bitter to him. It did not, however, interfere in any degree with his devotion to the duty which had been laid upon him. If he had to govern by sword and rifle, if by no other means could the supremacy of the law be maintained and social ruin averted in Ireland, then he would do his duty, and do it thoroughly. This was the resolve which he faithfully carried out during the terrible autumn and winter of 1881; but rightly to appreciate all that was involved in this stern devotion to his task, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that in the spring of that year he already clearly realized the truth that the performance of it must for ever alienate Irish sympathies from him, and must shut him out from a field of action towards which throughout his life he had been strongly attracted.

One can imagine the case of a minister who could revel in the exercise of the vast powers with which Forster was now entrusted, and who, inspired by a sense of the importance of the duty entrusted to him, could even feel a sense of exhilara-

tion in wielding all the forces of the law in a contest with the chronic disorder and disaffection of the Irish people. Forster had the combative instinct strongly developed, and it cannot be alleged that he had any qualms of conscience when called upon to deal severely with open enemies of the law. In fair fight he was prepared to strike hard. But he had looked to other means of pacifying Ireland than the rifles of the police or the bayonets of the soldiers, and he felt keenly the failure of the conciliatory policy which he had hoped to carry out. There was, too, a painful sense of the failure of the Protection Act to answer its purpose which added to the bitterness of the situation. At the close of June, the return of agrarian crimes for the quarter had reached the total of 961, against 755 in the preceding quarter, and 245 in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. It was thus made evident that the fall in the outrage returns which had followed the passing of the Protection Act had been temporary merely. Six murders, it should be noted, had taken place during the quarter, against two in the preceding quarter.

Mention has already been made of the threats which were frequently used against Mr. Forster, apparently with the idea of influencing his policy. It was during this month of June, 1881, that public attention began to be prominently called to the outrageous language of a Fenian ex-convict named O'Donovan Rossa, who had taken up his abode in New York, where he had placed himself at the head of an organization the object of which was to further the ends of the revolutionary party in Ireland by means of outrage and assassination. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster were both denounced by this miscreant, and it was understood that both were in danger of meeting with a violent death at the hands of his tools and accomplices. It was, however, against Mr. Forster that both in Ireland and in America the members of the party of violence raged most furiously. I am indebted to Mr. Jephson, who acted as private secretary to Mr. Forster whilst he was in Ireland, for an interesting communication throwing light upon this feature of his Irish work.

"Mr. Forster used to receive large numbers of threatening letters, many of them evidently mere threats, others of them of more genuine importance. They used to amuse him rather than otherwise, and if by chance a few days passed without his getting one, he would remark upon their absence. On one occasion an explosive letter was sent to him, but, as he had left Ireland the day before it arrived, it was brought to the Under-Secretary, who, rendered suspicious by its appearance,

handed it over to the police, with instructions to get it chemically examined, when its true nature was at once made apparent.

“More serious, however, than either threatening letters or this clumsy device, was the information which used from time to time to reach the Government of plots against Mr. Forster’s life. Precautionary measures were adopted—at first unknown to Mr. Forster, as he disliked the *gêne* of police protection, but later reluctantly submitted to by him. One morning in the early part of 1882, on my arrival at the Castle I received a written report giving detailed information of an intended attack on Mr. Forster. The source from which the information came was such that there could be no doubt as to its accuracy, or as to the imminence of the danger. On Mr. Forster coming to his office I brought the report to him to read, and urged on him in the very strongest terms the absolute necessity of his taking extra precautions for his personal safety. He listened rather impatiently to me, and then pushed the report away from him, saying to me, ‘You may do as you like about it, but I have a presentiment I am not going to die that way.’”

Among the many threatening letters which he received during the summer of 1881, there was one of which he used often to speak afterwards. It professed to come from a man who, having determined to assassinate him, had followed him into the Phoenix Park one morning when he was walking there accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. O’Brien. The murderer had dogged him for some time, but finally, according to his own statement, had determined to spare him for the sake of “the lovely girl” by whom he was accompanied. Forster would tell the story with unfeigned delight at the thought that he had thus been indebted for his safety to his daughter. But I shall have to return to this question of his personal safety, and the plots against his life, at a later period of my narrative.

To LORD RIPON.

“80, Eccleston Square, London, July 17th, 1881.

“MY DEAR RIPON,

“I have had your most delightful letter, I fear, for a month, and have not replied to it; and yet I am not, after all, an ungrateful wretch. I have been watching for time to send something really like a reply, and that is not easy; but I *was* glad to get your letter, for its sympathy with myself, and its hopefulness about your own health and work, which work I honestly believe to be most fruitful for good. . . .

“By the time this reaches you the Land Bill will be law ; and I fully believe much as brought in, though somewhat simplified, and therefore improved. I do not expect the Lords to try any important changes: they know we cannot accept them. The Irish Tory M.P.'s are almost to a man for the bill, and would be damaged if it was not passed, and Cairns knows their feeling and has influence in Irish matters. As to Ireland itself, its condition *is* bad, but better than it was. I have two evils to contend with—open resistance to legal process, evictions and the like, and secret outrages. When I went to Ireland at Whitsuntide, I made arrangements by which I got the better of the open resistance, and have in fact put it down, and that without a collision. I hardly dare say this, for fear the police and soldiers may, after all, be forced to shoot in earnest and really kill; but as yet, by employing sufficient force, and warning the people by special proclamation of the danger of resistance, I have avoided this calamity, and thereby disappointed the expectation, and I fear the wishes, of both extreme parties, which, alas! absorb almost all Ireland, or at least all Ireland which makes itself felt. The greatest of all Irish evils is the cowardice, or at best the non-action of the moderate men; and, indeed, this is the best, if not the sole argument for Home Rule. Sensible, moderate Irishmen let things alone and let them get from bad to worse, because they know that at a certain point we English must step in and prevent utter anarchy. As to the secret outrages, the first effect of the Protection Act was very good; but the fear was soon discounted, and I have had to put the Act into much more active operation, and, indeed, to arrest right and left; and at last I am stopping the outrages. I believe this month they will be at least only two-thirds of last month, or, indeed, of either May or June. For this I am, of course, much hated, and indeed I have had, and have still, a hard time of it. It seems almost like an irony of fate that, with my Irish antecedents, day after day has been occupied by despotic arrests on suspicion, and by arranging when and where to send detachments of troops. . . . Just read what Gladstone said, after a more than usually virulent attack on me last Monday—so virulent that it was not possible for him to treat it with the contempt of absolute silence. What he did say was very generous and loyal. In fact, one great compensation for the troubles and vexations of the last year has been the fact that I have got to know Gladstone, and really to love and honour him. No one could have been more faithful, or considerate, or generous to a colleague than he has been to me. He is

wonderfully well and vigorous, and his own hold on the country is stronger now than ever it was. As to myself, public opinion in England and Scotland is very kind to me; but I sometimes doubt whether it is possible for 'Buckshot' Forster to do more for Ireland than restore order and help to pass a good Land Bill. Good Irishmen, such as L—— and S——, tell me the hatred to me is hollow and not preventive of usefulness; but I sometimes doubt this, and I am not sure that I shall not take the first opportunity of getting out of my position without running away. . . . To return to Ireland for a moment, I am very anxious about my arrears clause. I enclose it. It is an effort to avoid the great administrative difficulty of the immediate future. Unless I can tempt and, in fact, bribe landlord and tenant to agree together, we shall have a bad autumn with certain and, to a great extent, justifiable evictions. It is no use crying over spilt milk; but I still believe that the passage of my Compensation for Disturbance Bill, last year, would have stayed the strike against rent."

The settlement of the arrears question in the Land Bill, which is alluded to in the foregoing letter, was embodied in a proposal that the Government should advance fifty per cent. of the arrears due for the bad years 1878 and 1879, in cases where the tenants and landlords had settled for the rents of 1880. The money required for this measure was to be drawn from the surplus of the Irish Church funds. This proposal was accepted by the House of Commons by a large majority.

"Father's letters this morning," writes his daughter (July 25th), "included three typical specimens. A severely worded letter from an Irishwoman living in London, appealing to his conscience, and requesting him peremptorily to release those innocent persons the 'subjects;' a friendly letter from a Newcastle man, assuring the Irish Secretary of the loyalty, support, and approbation of the majority of his townsmen; a threatening letter, adorned with the usual coffin and cross-bones, from an Irishman purporting to be a sub-constable in Ulster."

The passing of the Land Act, after a stormy crisis occasioned by the action of the Peers, and a fierce attack by the Parnellite members upon Mr. Forster's administration of the Protection Act, were the closing features of the session of 1881. So far as the Land Act is concerned, it is bare justice to Forster to say that all through the Parliamentary work of the year, and even at the time when his own duties in Ireland were most pressing, he had been more deeply interested in the fate of that measure than in any other question. Allusion has already

been made to the part which he had in shaping it. He shares with Mr. Gladstone the responsibility for the measure. Attempts were made at the time by Irish members, and some English members also, to convey to the public the impression that, whilst the Protection Act was the work alone of Mr. Forster, the Land Act was the sole work of Mr. Gladstone. The statement was absolutely untrue, and Forster's name may with just as much reason be associated with the one measure as with the other. The passing of the Land Act greatly revived his spirits and his hopes for the success of the ministerial policy in Ireland; and when, in the closing days of the session, he had to defend himself from an organized attack upon his Irish administration, he did so in a manner which won the approbation of the overwhelming majority of the House. With the Land Act in force, and Irish tenants showing themselves eager to make use of it, things undoubtedly looked better in August than they had done for several months previously.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BATTLE WITH THE LAND LEAGUE.

THE returns for the month of July showed so considerable a falling-off of agrarian outrages that Forster and his colleagues were entitled to congratulate themselves upon a distinct improvement in the condition of the country. So hopeful, indeed, did everything now look, that, when he had visited Dublin in order to settle the appointments necessitated by the establishment of the Land Court, Forster was able to leave England, on August 27th, for a short holiday in Switzerland. He was, however, quickly called back to his duties. A vacancy had occurred for Tyrone, and a contest had resulted in the return of a supporter of the Government. This election, following immediately upon the close of the session and the passing of the Land Act, seemed to Mr. Gladstone to indicate that such an improvement had taken place in public feeling, that the time had come when there might be some relaxation of the system of coercion. He was particularly anxious that one at least of the imprisoned suspects, Father Sheehy, who had been in gaol for some months, should be released, believing that such a step would do much to conciliate those tenant-farmers who were now hesitating as to whether they should trust to the Land Act or continue to give their allegiance to the Land League. On September 8th he wrote to Mr. Forster, who was then at Annecy, urging these views upon him; and Forster felt that he must at once return to England.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“Annecy, September 11th, 1881.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“Your letter of the 8th inst. reached me this morning, forwarded from Chamounix. I felt at once that matters were too critical for me to be longer away, and therefore I get to London as quickly as I can, and I hope you will

receive to-day my telegram, saying that I hope to arrive there to-morrow evening. I agree with you that this unlooked-for good fortune in Tyrone is a strong temptation to turn the flank of the Parnellites by an act of clemency; but there are considerations which must not be ignored. Ulster is not Connaught or Munster. We have had few or no outrages in Tyrone. We have no proof as yet that Parnell has lost his influence in the south or west; or that the intimidating orders of the league will be disobeyed in Connaught or Munster, or that outrages there will diminish.

"I have great hopes that the league is losing its power, and that the Tyrone defeat will have a great effect throughout Ireland; but up to now Limerick, West Cork, Kerry, and the Loughrea district of Galway have been as bad as ever.

"A few days, however, will give us the necessary information, and as regards Monaghan, there must be some days before the election.

"You will observe that in accordance with the decision come to when I was in Dublin, they are releasing daily those men respecting whom they are day by day receiving reports that detention is no longer necessary. Any way, I think events confirm this policy; but we must, I think, be pretty sure of the worst districts before a general amnesty. It would be very awkward to have such general amnesty followed by an outbreak of outrage.

"On the other hand, if we do more than we are now doing—viz. release, (1) on grounds of ill health, leniently considered; (2) where local authorities consider detention unnecessary,—I do not see where we can stop short of a general amnesty, or, at any rate, of release of all not suspected of murder: nor do I think anything short of this, including Davitt, would have much influence on the Irish imagination, or indeed, be very easy to justify. . . .

"On the whole, what I incline to is this,—

"(1) Get all possible information this week as to actual outrages, intimidation, and real power of the Land League. The convention meeting and the American remittances will both tell us much.

"(2) If we still find the Land League losing power and the outrages diminishing, then act boldly, and run the risk of a release of all the suspects except the suspected murderers.

"It certainly would be better that no important step should be taken in my absence, as we cannot afford to have my power weakened. But I can now, if necessary, get to Dublin on Wednesday, and shall certainly be there on Friday. I hope

you will get this on Tuesday morning, and that therefore I may get a reply in London on Wednesday morning, or, if necessary, a telegram on Tuesday.

“As Spencer is at Aix, I have telegraphed him to meet me, if possible, at the station, as both you and I will be glad to get his opinion.

“Yours very truly,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

On September 15th, Forster reached Hawarden, and with his family spent the night there; proceeding to Dublin on the following morning. It was clear, both to him and to Mr. Gladstone, that a critical moment was approaching in the struggle between the Government and the Land League. Ministers had been anxious to see how the Land Act would be received in Ireland, and the Tyrone election had convinced them that, in some parts of the country at least, there was a disposition to recognize the importance of the boon which had been conferred upon the tenantry. Forster, however, as the letter just given shows, was not so sanguine as Mr. Gladstone seemed to be regarding the general feeling of Irishmen outside of Ulster, and he viewed with dread the possible results of anything which might be construed into a surrender to Mr. Parnell and the league. Nor did the events which immediately followed in Ireland tend to reassure him upon this subject.

Of these, one of the most noticeable was the Land League Convention, which sat for three days, at the Rotunda in Dublin, to discuss the Land Act. The members of this convention did not denounce the Act, but they gave Mr. Parnell the credit of having compelled ministers and Parliament to carry it. At the same time Mr. Parnell himself made it clear that he was prepared to watch the operation of the Act jealously; and he announced that the duty of the Land League would be to provide test cases by means of which the precise value of the measure might be ascertained before any general use was made of it by the tenantry. Another important event, showing that as yet the Government had certainly not “touched bottom” in their attempts to sound the depths of Irish discontent, was the great reception accorded to Mr. Parnell in Dublin. This demonstration, which took place on his return to the capital after attending some Land League meetings in the provinces, was said to be the most remarkable incident of the kind which had occurred in Ireland since the days of O’Connell. It was quite clear that the rivalry between “the uncrowned king” and the lawful Government of Ireland was still maintained,

and that the supremacy of the law had yet to be secured. In spite of this fact, the release of Father Sheehy took place, and—as Mr. Forster had feared—it was regarded as a triumph for the popular cause. Father Sheehy accompanied Mr. Parnell on some of his speaking tours, and both the priest and the Parliamentary leader indulged, not merely in the most vehement attacks upon the Government in general and upon Mr. Forster in particular, but in a systematic attempt to prejudice the minds of the people against the Land Act, and to prevent any use being made of the benefits which were conferred by it.

On September 26th, Forster wrote to Mr. Gladstone suggesting that Mr. Parnell himself should be arrested. The great demonstration in Dublin in honour of the member for Cork had been most disloyal in its character, and it was known that similar demonstrations were being organized in other parts of the country. “In your letter you ask whether Parnell has ever condemned the explosive dynamite policy. I do not remember any such condemnation, but I do remember that he called the Salford Barracks explosion, which killed one or two persons, a practical joke. I will send you the extract. I think you will do great good by denouncing Parnell’s action and policy at Leeds, but I do not think he is worse than the others. On the contrary, I think he is moved by his tail, and has been driven to make this speech.”

Mr. Gladstone assented to the arrest of Mr. Parnell, if, in the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, he had by his speeches been guilty of treasonable practices. An appeal was forthwith made to the law officers for an opinion on this point, and the nature of their decision was not long left in doubt. Nothing, however, will more clearly display the character of the situation at this most critical moment in the history of Ireland than Mr. Forster’s letters to the Prime Minister, and the facts will be far better conveyed to the reader in his words than in any narrative by another person, however carefully it may be compiled.

TO MR. GLADSTONE.

“Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,

“October 2nd, 1881.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“Frederick Cavendish will have told you how anxious and unsatisfactory matters are here. Last evening I received from Law a detailed answer to my questions as to our powers, but, unless you wish it, I do not know that it is worth while troubling you with it.

“It contains nothing new, with one exception. J— discovered two days ago a section in the 1861 Act (cap. 100, s. 39) enabling magistrates to give three months in case of violence, or threats of violence, to any person with intent to hinder him from buying or selling wheat or other grain, flour, meal, malt, or potatoes in any market or other place. This is useful for some boycotting; and, while glad to find any new weapon, I feel somewhat aggrieved that it has not been before discovered. It will be very difficult, however, to obtain evidence of the threat of violence, which I suppose must be physical force. With this exception we have only one fresh card to play—a more stringent use of the Protection Act. Instructed by experience, and taking into account the failure of witnesses and the uselessness of juries, I believe the police inspectors and the resident magistrates are making the best of the ordinary law, and specially lose no chance of arresting for assaults whenever possible to obtain evidence. But unless we can strike down the boycotting weapon, Parnell will beat us; for men, rather than let themselves be ruined, will obey him and disobey the law. I send you a most true description of this weapon by a priest, spoken last Monday at Maryborough, in Parnell’s presence. I read it to the three Roman Catholic bishops who called on me to talk on education; but, notwithstanding their recent resolutions, I have no expectation that the bishops will silence such priests. How, then, can we strike down this weapon? Solely by the Protection Act, and by giving it a wide interpretation, not justified at first, but now, to my mind, abundantly justified.

“I think, where we have reasonable suspicion (1) that a man has been intimidated in order to prevent him carrying on his lawful employment, or to oblige him to refuse to pay his just debts, or to join the Land League; (2) that this intimidation is such as to give alarm to any man with average nerve; (3) that this intimidation has been ordered by the Land League, either in Dublin or in a country district; (4) that any man is a ringleader in giving such orders;—then I think we are justified in arresting such man.

“The only legal doubt is whether such intimidation can be held to include ruin to property, and not confined to threats of personal violence. . . . It would be useless and weak merely to arrest local Land Leaguers and to let off the Dublin leaders, especially Sexton and Parnell. If we strike a blow at all it must be a sufficiently hard blow to paralyze the action of the league, and for this purpose I think we must make a simultaneous arrest of the central leaders and of those local leaders

who conduct the boycotting. There is no doubt that, though poor men do not much fear being locked up with plenty to eat and their families cared for, well-to-do men very much fear being treated as suspects.

"I think the leaders would cease to boycott if they found out it meant imprisonment. There is no doubt such simultaneous arrest would be a very strong measure; but I think English opinion would support it. I see no alternative unless we allow the Land League to govern Ireland: to determine what rent shall be paid; what decisions by the Commission shall be obeyed; what farms shall be taken; what grass-lands shall be allowed; what shops shall be kept open; what laws shall be obeyed, etc., etc., etc.

"This other course may be suggested. Call Parliament together to pass a law to suppress the Land League, and declare any association illegal with the object to prevent the payment of any lawful debt.

"The objections to this course are: (1) The delay. (2) The difficulty of passing the Act. (The Radicals and working-men would resist any general Act.) (3) But worse still, to my mind, its uselessness. No Irish jury would convict under such Act. (4) The Land League would change its name, or meet under no name. Meetings to address their constituents would suffice. (5) The Act would have to give power to prevent all political meetings, and even then the orders to boycott would be given and obeyed without meetings, and with little risk of punishment if evidence before magistrates, still less verdicts before juries, be required. (6) After all, we should be driven to rely on arrests on suspicion, unless we resorted to martial law, in which I believe any attempt at fresh coercion would end.

"Meantime, we have to deal with *men*, not *names*. There remains the question, Will the Land Act beat the Land League, and save us from more stringent coercion? I have little, almost no hope, that it will; but, as we have waited so long, it may be well to TRY to wait a fortnight longer, when the Land Courts will be at work, and we shall find whether men's minds are absorbed by the courts, instead of by the efforts to intimidate or to resist intimidation.

"I do not think, however, we can wait beyond a fortnight, if we are to act at all. The end of this month and the beginning of next, the landlords must make a desperate effort to get their rents, and if we are to paralyze the Land League at all, we must do it before then.

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER."

From MR. GLADSTONE.

“Hawarden, October 3rd, 1881.

“Your sad and saddening letter supplies material for the most serious reflection; but I need not reply at great length, mainly because in the points most urgently practical I very much agree with you. I almost take for granted, and I shall assume until you correct me, that your meaning about ‘ruin to property’ is as follows:—you do not mean the ruin to property which may directly result from exclusive dealing, but you mean ruin to property by violence, *e.g.* burning of a man’s haystack, because he had let his cars on hire to the constabulary. On this assumption I feel quite prepared politically to concur with you in acting upon legal advice to this effect.

“Nor do I dissent, under the circumstances, from the series of propositions by which you seek to connect Parnell and Co. with the prevalent intimidation.

“But I hardly think that so novel an application of the Protection Act should be undertaken without the Cabinet. I anticipate their concurrence, and their preference of this mode of proceeding to an autumn session, for the purpose of putting down the league (my old fancy). But the Cabinet, besides being strong in itself, has four members who have Irish experience, three of them in the House of Lords. Here is a force the use of which, I am disposed to think, the occasion calls for.

“As for the time, I do not know whether you see advantage in waiting for the Commission to act. I presume its action would not be felt and understood so as to operate upon the case before us until after days, perhaps weeks, from its meeting.

“If you agree in this, what would you say to Wednesday in next week? Reply by telegraph or post, as may be convenient. You might wish an earlier day. . . .

“I hope that you will find adequate support under your labours and anxieties. I am sure you will continue with unabated manfulness to look them in the face.”

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“Dublin, October 4th, 1881

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“Thank you very much for your letter. My definition of ruin to property is not precisely yours.

“I do not think we can confine the definition to such ruin

as is caused by physical violence, as, for instance, threat of burning a haystack; but it must be a 'crime punishable by law, being an incitement to intimidation.' I believe the lawyers now think that the ruin, far greater than burning a haystack, which follows from a stoppage of sales and purchases is such intimidation, but I will put your point precisely to them. . . .

"I suppose it will be necessary to have a Cabinet, and if so, Wednesday in next week will be, I think, the last day. At any rate, it will show that the action of the Executive is not merely my action, but that of the Government.

"Both sides here, landlords and Land Leaguers, are anxious to give the impression that I have not the support of the Government or even of yourself. Very likely your speech at Leeds will remove such impression.

"When I spoke of waiting for the Land Act, I did not mean waiting for the actual decisions of the courts, but waiting for a test of the feeling of the tenants by the number of applications and their effect on general feeling.

"I have just received private information that the Land League has received a *large* remittance from America, and is therefore much increasing its activity. This will enable landlords and leaguers to reiterate their declaration that Parnell really governs the country—a statement not easy to bear, because I feel just now it is too true!

"I think you may do good by your Leeds speech, by saying—if I may venture a suggestion—in unmistakable words, that if the Land Act continues to be met by disorder, there must be a new departure in administrative as well as legislative policy. Now that we have made the law just, we are called upon to put down lawlessness with a strong hand; nor do I see how we can call Parliament together to give us fresh coercion until we have tried the full extent of our present powers. . . .

"P.S.—I have just received the following telegram from Mill Street, Co. Cork: 'Patrick Eary shot at Doonasheen last night at 11.30, by a party of armed men, who went round to some of the farmers and asked them if they had paid their rent—the man shot is now apparently dying.' I have a further telegram that he is dead."

"Is it wholly impossible," wrote Mr. Gladstone, in his letter, acknowledging the foregoing (October 5th), "to enlist the action of loyal men as special constables or otherwise, in support of law and order, *e.g.* for day work in relief of the

constabulary, in some parts of Ireland, at any rate, if not in all, so as to relieve our overworked force, and increase the total of our available means? I feel anxious, but I cannot bring myself to despair about this. At Leeds I shall do my best."

The meeting at Leeds, to which frequent reference was made in the correspondence of Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone at this time, was one of the notable political events of the year. Mr. Gladstone had been elected at the head of the poll at Leeds, in the general election of 1880. He had not, however, accepted the seat, choosing that for Midlothian. His visit to Leeds was to thank the electors for the honour conferred upon him in the previous year, and it was regarded with the utmost enthusiasm by the Liberals of Yorkshire. It was natural that Forster should think yearningly of his old friends in the West Riding at this moment, and should regret the fact that he was compelled to be absent from so interesting a gathering. All the preparations were now, however, being made for the great blow which was meditated against Mr. Parnell and the Land League. In the letter from Mr. Gladstone, of which I have quoted a small portion, Forster was earnestly adjured to have everything in readiness for the arrest of the leaders of the league in case the consent of the Cabinet to that measure should be obtained at the meeting which had been summoned for the following week. He had accordingly to remain at his post in Dublin, making preparations for the anticipated *coup*. His presence there was all the more necessary, because Mr. Burke, the devoted Under-Secretary, was absent.* Forster would have been glad to have had him with him at that crisis; but it was absolutely necessary that secrecy should be preserved regarding the intentions of the Government; and if Mr. Burke, who was taking a short holiday on the Continent, had been recalled to Ireland, the suspicions of the Land Leaguers would undoubtedly have been aroused. It devolved, therefore, upon the Chief Secretary alone to make all the preparations for the blow which he hoped soon to be able to strike at the enemies of the law in Ireland. His sole confidant was the commander of the forces, Sir Thomas Steele.

* Lord Cowper had for some weeks been absent on leave. He met Mr. Forster by appointment in London on Wednesday, October 12th, and was informed of the intended arrest as soon as the Cabinet broke up, but did not return to Ireland till after the arrest had been made, in order to avoid exciting suspicion.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

[*Confidential.*]

“Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Dublin, October 6th, 1881.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I have both your letters of the 4th and 6th.

“I will write to the Lord Chancellor to-day if possible, if not to-morrow.

“I entirely agree with you that if we strike we must do so instantly after the Cabinet, especially as regards the principal arrest.

“Naturally, you wonder the police do not catch the armed parties. All I can say is, I do my best to stimulate them, and they have been more successful in some places, but it is hard for either you or me to estimate their difficulties. As regards special constables, one of the first questions I asked months ago was, Why could we not have them? I was soon convinced that in Ireland they are impossible. In the south and west we cannot get them, and in the north, Orangemen would offer themselves, and we should probably have to put a policeman by the side of every special to keep him in order. . . . This will catch you just before you start for Leeds. I think such a speech as you propose must do good. I wish I could be there to hear it, and to hear the cheers.

“I suppose I shall hear very soon when the Cabinet is fixed; but I hope the fact of the summons will not get out till after Sunday. There are several Land League meetings on Sunday, and I want to give Parnell and Co. full swing.

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Mr. Gladstone went to Leeds, and had a reception there which exceeded all expectations; it may be doubted, indeed, whether any political leader of the century ever received so remarkable a greeting from the people of a great community. One speech of the many which he made stood out in special prominence and attracted universal attention. It was that which he delivered at a great banquet, held in a noble hall specially erected for the purpose, on the evening of October 6th. In this speech he devoted himself to the Irish question. The hall had been decorated with the names of prominent Liberal statesmen, and directly opposite to where Mr. Gladstone stood was inscribed the name of Mr. Forster. Amid enthusiastic cheers from the vast audience the Prime Minister pointed to Forster’s name, and spoke in generous terms of the painful and

arduous task in which he was then engaged; and then he went on in clear and forcible language to denounce the conduct of Mr. Parnell and of the other Land League leaders, in striving to stand between the people of Ireland and the Land Act in order that the beneficial effects of that measure might not be allowed to reach those on whose behalf it had been passed. Such conduct, however, Mr. Gladstone declared, would not be tolerated. "The resources of civilization" were not exhausted, as Mr. Parnell would yet discover if he continued to maintain his attitude of uncompromising hostility to the law. The speech made an immense impression at the time—an impression which the events of the next few days greatly deepened. Even Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the Cabinet did not know at the moment when he spoke that he and Mr. Forster had at that time practically decided on the arrest of the Land League leader; but everybody felt that such a speech indicated the resolve of the Government not to be beaten in their conflict with the forces of the league, and portended a grave development of the ministerial policy.

"The reception of your name," wrote Mr. Gladstone to Forster (October 8th), "in both the Cloth Hall meetings was everything that could be desired. There is no time for details; but in one word it is a wonderful community. I expected much, and found much more."

TO MR. GLADSTONE.

"Dublin, October 9th, 1881.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"Let me thank you with all my heart for your speech, both on public and private grounds. Your most kind allusion to myself really helps me, and, though too kind, I am very grateful. All that *words* can do will be done by your warning. It will have effect in Ireland, but we must not be sanguine. The effect will, I fear, soon die out, if deeds do not follow words."

"I think the general interpretation of your speech is that we will act if your warning be disregarded. It therefore may be difficult to arrest P. and Co. on Wednesday or Thursday for conduct before your speech.

"On the other hand, boycotting orders may be renewed to-day or before Wednesday; if so, I should advise the Cabinet to immediate arrest.

"It is possible, though not, I think, probable, that Parnell's reply to you at the Wexford meeting to-day may be a treason-

able outburst. If the lawyers clearly advise me to that effect, I do not think I can postpone immediate arrest, on suspicion of treasonable practices. I understand your letter of the 27th ult. to approve of this. I have drawn up a minute for the Cabinet to be circulated on Tuesday evening and on Wednesday, and send to-night to a man in whom I have the fullest confidence to have it printed, and circulated most confidentially.

"I arrive in London Wednesday morning, and will call on you before the Cabinet.

"Yours very truly,
"W. E. FORSTER."

The Cabinet was summoned suddenly for a meeting on Wednesday, October 12th. Nobody either in Ireland or England knew exactly what was about to happen; but an uneasy sense of some impending event of signal importance was felt both in the Land League and the Government circles in Dublin. On October 10th things looked very bad. "They are worse now than they have yet been," was the remark which Forster made in his family circle that morning. More than two hundred suspects were in prison, but the total of outrages still grew. In September, 416 agrarian crimes had been reported, being a higher number than in any previous month of the year save January.

Still more serious than the outrages was, however, the hold which Mr. Parnell now seemed to have obtained over the tenantry, for whose benefit the Land Act had been passed. It was evident that the Act was at the national leader's mercy, and that unless some means could be found of crippling his power for mischief, no good effects would be allowed to accrue from it.

On Tuesday evening, Forster, who had been in secret consultation with Sir Thomas Steele during the day, crossed over to London; and on the Wednesday, after an interview with Mr. Gladstone, he met the Cabinet, and obtained the necessary assent to the arrest of Mr. Parnell. From the Cabinet he walked to the nearest telegraph office, and himself despatched a message to Sir Thomas Steele. It contained the one word "Proceed;" and the Irish commander-in-chief, who alone was in possession of the great secret, at once took the necessary measures for securing the person of the Land League leader so soon as the warrant for his arrest had been signed. In the evening, Forster left London, and on Thursday morning he was once more in Dublin. The public, and even the officials

at the Castle, with the one exception I have named, knew nothing of what had been his business in London on the previous day, or what had been decided upon by the Cabinet. It was absolutely essential for the success of the great blow which was about to be struck at the league that the strictest secrecy should be observed, and Forster certainly deserves the credit of having secured that secrecy. He drove to the Castle, and there signed the warrant already prepared for Mr. Parnell's arrest. Then he went to the Secretary's Lodge, and sat down to breakfast with his family. Before the meal was finished, a note announcing that Mr. Parnell had been arrested and was at that moment in Kilmainham was placed in the hands of the Chief Secretary.

Within twelve hours the news had spread throughout the civilized world, and everywhere it created a profound sensation. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at a great meeting in the Guildhall on the same day, first announced the fact of Mr. Parnell's arrest to the people of England, and the statement was received with an outburst of enthusiasm that startled even the speaker himself. It was hailed almost as though it had been the news of a signal victory gained by England over a hated and formidable enemy. The truth is that Mr. Parnell had up to that moment impressed the English imagination in a very singular manner. He seemed to have entrenched himself behind fortifications which were impregnable. His followers might bring themselves within reach of the law. He, however, whilst carrying on an open war against the Irish Government had seemed able to set the Executive at defiance. His astuteness had been equal to his courage, and even when dealing the heaviest blows at the authority of the Crown in Ireland, he had appeared to keep himself within the letter of the law. There was an angry sense of impotence on the part of the English people as they watched his course, and a feeling of wonder as to how long the impunity he had hitherto enjoyed was to last. The announcement of his arrest seemed to break the spell of his immunity, and to bring him down to the level of the other members of his party. Throughout England the belief was general that his imprisonment in Kilmainham must mean the downfall of his authority and the extinction of the great organization of which he was the head.

The exultant joy which the news of the action of the Government occasioned in all English circles, had its striking counterpart in the dismay which was felt by the Land Leaguers. For the moment it seemed to them, as well as to their opponents, that all had been lost. Their most trusted

leaders, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Sexton, were in prison; their treasurer, Mr. Egan, had only saved himself and the funds of the league by flight. They were temporarily stunned by the blow. But with surprising quickness they recovered themselves, and delivered their counter-attack upon the Government in the shape of an address to the tenants of Ireland, calling upon them to cease all payment of rent whilst their natural leaders were in prison. Forster was prepared for this step, however, and he met it by another measure, not less important in its character than the arrest of the Land League leaders. This was a proclamation which he instantly issued on his own responsibility, declaring the Land League to be an illegal association, and announcing that its meetings would be suppressed by force.

By a somewhat dramatic coincidence the proclamation against the Land League was issued on the day on which the Land Court was opened (October 20th). At the opening of the court, some amusement was created by a slip of the tongue on the part of the clerk, who, in making the royal proclamation, described the new tribunal as "the Court of the Land League." A little later in the day the Chief Secretary's thunderbolt against the league was suddenly launched without warning, and the country learned that the fight between "the two living powers in Ireland" was one which both sides were determined to wage to the bitter end. Forster never took a stronger step than when he thus, as it were by a stroke of the pen, suppressed the Land League. There was no time for consultation with his colleagues. The reply to the "No Rent" proclamation of the Leaguers, if it were to be of any use, needed to be given at once, and it was consequently solely upon his own responsibility, and without leave from the Cabinet, that he issued the proclamation declaring the league to be an illegal association. Convinced, however, that such action was necessary, he did not hesitate to take it, and to trust to his colleagues for a justification of his conduct.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Dublin Castle, October 20th, 1881.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I trust you are not really poorly.

"We have taken a very important step to-day. I hope and believe you will approve.

"The 'No Rent' manifesto of the league could not be passed by, and gave us an excellent excuse. Accordingly,

the law officers have drawn up the proclamation I enclose. Sullivan assisted in the wording, and O'Hagan approves of the purport.

"You will have observed that a priest, Cantwell, presided at Tuesday's meeting, and made a violent speech. The question was whether to arrest him. I never had a more difficult question. He is the administrator of Croke's parish, and his arrest might have driven Croke to some outburst, which would also have obliged his arrest.

"I decided not to arrest him yesterday, sending underground messages to the bishops of his danger. I am glad I waited, as Croke comes out this morning with a long letter denouncing the manifesto. I hope the good bishops will follow. What with the bishops deserting the league—our arrests and proclamation and the Land Court opened to-day, I am now really sanguine of success.

"Herbert will tell you of our conversation last evening with — and —. On the whole it was hopeful, but I believe all the outside help we shall get will be (1) moral force demonstrations; (2) defence by men of themselves and their property.

"As yet I can find no one who does not think that volunteer policemen will do more harm than good. I had yesterday a curious illustration. We have stopped the rowdy mob riots in Dublin, but they are precisely the riots which would have been put down in an English city by specials. I suggested specials, but every one was against me, by reason of the partisan, and probably the religious animosity that would be provoked, and the bitter rancour that would be left.

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER."

The latter part of this letter had reference to renewed attempts, which Forster was making at the suggestion of Mr. Gladstone, to secure from the law-abiding portion of the community some active assistance in the maintenance of law and order. He himself had little hope of the success of such attempts; and, as a matter of fact, the well-meant project failed when it was sought to carry it into effect.

Writing to one of his colleagues, Forster defended and explained the course he had taken with regard to the league and the suppression of public meetings.

“ November 1st, 1881.

“ MY DEAR ———,

“ Your inquiry is twofold. (1) As to the legality of our late action. (2) As to its policy, or rather timeliness,—why not earlier? . . . The effective part of our proclamation is not the mere declaration that the Land League is illegal—this declaration we might have made at any time since our prosecution of Parnell and Co., but the declaration that we would disperse the public meetings, and the warning that we would arrest prominent leaders, without doubt is a new departure, become possible by the development of the Land League policy into an undoubted organization of robbery by terrorism.

“ At the end of my mem. you will see a letter from Johnson, stating that he had now arrived at the conviction that we could disperse the public meetings as liable to break the peace; and we made up our minds to arrest the leaders under the Protection Act.

“ No jury can attack these arrests, and I am quite prepared to justify them as necessary arrests to prevent flagrant intimidation. With regard to the public meetings, I have, between ourselves, had hard steering. I was much pressed to instruct the police to force an entrance into committee-rooms and forcibly break up the committees. This would have resulted in an action which must have come to a jury, and probably to a hostile verdict.

“ I have, therefore, given instructions to warn persons attending private meetings that they are liable to arrest, and to take down their names. Hitherto this has sufficed, but we may have to make many arrests under the Protection Act. Of course an action *may* be brought against us for force used in dispersing a public meeting, but I do not think this likely if we continue to take care that our force is overpowering; and, anyhow, of this we must run the risk.

“ (2) Now as to time. When could we have taken the step earlier? Remember this—the proclamation would have been a mistake unless we had first arrested Parnell and the Dublin leaders. We could not have arrested them or suppressed the Land League while the Land Bill was passing. Public opinion would not have supported us; and so high-handed a proceeding requires an overpowering concurrence of public opinion.

“ Until the Land Act was passed we had to find out and prove to the public that it would not of itself beat the Land League. I really do not know how the blow *could* have been struck earlier; but I am quite sure that it would have been

fatal to wait longer ; and nothing but the consideration that the 'No Rent' manifesto must be immediately answered by a suppressing proclamation induced me to issue it without consulting my colleagues. The law officers fully approved it, and I felt sure Gladstone would approve, but I did not venture even to consult him. He might have thought it necessary to consult the Cabinet, and hesitation would have been destruction. As to our present position, it is much better than it was, but we have still a hard fight of it.

"Yours very truly,
"W. E. FORSTER."

"The Leaguers," Forster wrote to Mr. Gladstone (October 22nd), "are showing no open fight, and every report we get shows that our last blow has struck home, and it is felt to be well-timed. . . . You say you are still unconvinced about aid from the community. If you mean [physical aid, I think a week at the Castle would convince you. Every one tells me, and my own experience convinces me, that if I asked for physical aid I should not get it where wanted, and when I did get it would have to exhaust time and energy in preventing civil war. On the other hand, I gladly stimulate all efforts for moral aid, though these require careful watching. For instance, I had to tell——, one of our very best landlords, courageous and moderate, that one of the resolutions of his excellent association broke the law, and would have to be rescinded. . . . I ought to add that my fear now is an increase of secret outrages."

The last words of this letter indicated the direction in which the thoughts of those who were at the head of affairs in Ireland now ran, and too fully were their apprehensions to be realized during the winter which was now setting in. So far as the open agitation and resistance to the law were concerned, the victory lay with the Executive. The Land League had been suppressed on the ground that it sought to obtain an unlawful object,—the prevention of the payment of rent by criminal means,—intimidation and conspiracy. The chief leaders of the popular movement were either in prison or were carefully keeping out of Ireland. The Land Courts had been opened, and were overcrowded with applicants for justice. The Land League meetings had been to a large extent abandoned, and, though there had been one rough struggle in the streets of Dublin between the police and the mob, the authorities felt that they could answer for the maintenance of public order. All this was to the good ; and if

this had been all, Forster would have been able to congratulate himself upon the brilliant success of the course which the Executive was pursuing.

But that other force which has always played so important a part in Irish agrarian agitations, and which is never so potent as during the long, dark nights of winter, now seemed to awake to a renewed term of active life. Whilst the Irish leaders were in retirement in Kilmainham—for it is difficult to speak of their detention there, under circumstances of personal ease and comfort, in the terms which are applicable to an ordinary imprisonment,—and whilst the meetings of the Land League had of necessity come to an end, gangs of desperate men, who believed themselves to be carrying out the policy and furthering the work of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, were engaged in establishing a system of organized terrorism over a great portion of the country. Bands of “moonlighters,” men masked and armed, roamed over the poverty-stricken hillsides, and the lonely highways of Connaught and Munster, carrying out the decrees of secret courts formed in every hamlet for the purpose of enforcing the “unwritten law” of the suppressed league. The victims of these bodies of secret assassins were not the landlords or the wealthy. They were men of the same rank in life as their murderers—cottiers and small farmers, people whose lives had been one long struggle against starvation, and whose abject poverty and misery might well—it might have been thought—have exempted them from the cruel persecutions of their neighbours. But nothing could protect any man who had incurred the vengeance of these secret emissaries of the suppressed league.

The outrages which had marked the previous winter were renewed upon a larger scale. During the month of October, 1881, three murders were committed in the province of Munster, the particulars of which may be mentioned, as they are typical of the crimes of the outrage-mongers. Michael Moloney, a farmer in County Clare, when sitting in his bedroom at seven o'clock in the evening, was shot dead by some one who thrust the muzzle of his gun through the window and deliberately took aim at his victim. Moloney's crime was that he had paid his rent. In the same county, two days later, Thomas McMahan, a farmer, was found in the cowhouse of a neighbour, lying dead with a bullet in his brain. From the information which they gathered, the police arrived at the conclusion that McMahan had been put to death at a secret meeting of moonlighters, because he had refused to join in an outrage on the estate on which he lived. In County Cork, a

farmer's son, named Patrick Leary, was shot dead by a party of men who were going round among the tenants on a certain estate, cautioning them against paying their rents. Leary was in the house of one of these tenants when the moonlighters arrived. They believed that he was a detective, and instantly shot him. These are typical instances of the murders which were reported to Forster from different parts of the country. But in addition to actual murders there were many cases of firing at individuals or into dwelling-houses which did not result in death; there were daily instances of incendiary fires and the mutilation of cattle; whilst threatening letters were scattered broadcast throughout the disturbed districts.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,
“November 20th, 1881.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“In your letter of the 17th inst. you ask for particulars of a case of bodily outrage inflicted for payment of rent, supposing it to be the first case. I am sorry to say this is no novelty. I send you the confidential return of aggravated outrages for October, in which you will find one murder and four firings into dwellings, believed to have been perpetrated as punishment for paying rents. I am sorry to say there is a turn decidedly for the worse, and we are going to have a most anxious winter. It is now but too clear that, in many counties, we shall have to compel the tenants to submit to the law. Our first duty will be to send so large a force with the sheriff's officer as will secure either payment of rent or eviction. This, though requiring careful organization, will be our least difficulty. The party of robbers rely, and rightly rely, much more on the terror caused by outrage than on open resistance.

“The disease with which we have to contend is so deep-seated, that it changes its form from day to day, according to our treatment. Boycotting, so far as it is exclusive dealing, is an open outrage, and our late action has much checked it. And now we have more secret outrages and attempts to murder. We must meet this as best we can by (1) more soldiers and billeting of them; (2) economizing our police force; (3) multiplying arrests under Protection Act.

“We must aim at locking up all murder planners, and such patrolling as will make night outrages impossible; but these ideals are not easily realized. However, I hope to realize them so far that the tenant will generally think the Land Court the

best alternative. But then we must have the courts throughout Ireland, at any rate in every disturbed county; and I write to-day to Frederick Cavendish to that effect.

"You will again ask, Is it not possible to get outside aid to the soldiers or police? I can assure you that it is not possible for any one to have thought or said more about this than I have done the last few days. I lose no opportunity of pressing for it, but as yet without success.

"There is one thing I think we may do, somewhat in this direction. A large number of police are employed in personal protection. This does not require training, only honest fidelity and courage, and we think of getting extra men for this duty, giving the preference to constabulary and army pensioners. . . .

"One word about myself. If we could get the country quiet, I should be anxious to leave Ireland. While we are fighting for law and order, I cannot desert my post; but this battle over, and the Land Act well at work, I am quite sure that the best course for Ireland, as well as for myself, would be my replacement by some one not tarred by the coercion brush. But alas! it is but too probable that the battle will not be won when Parliament meets, and that, instead of releasing the suspects, we shall have to consider whether we renew the Protection Act, or replace it by some other form of repression.

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER."

It was undoubtedly the discouragement he felt at the spread of the outrages which led Forster thus openly to suggest to Mr. Gladstone his retirement from his post. To have been compelled to give up his plans for conciliating Irish opinion, and to resort to repression and coercion in order to maintain order, and then to find that even with coercion he could not put down outrage of a cruel and cowardly kind, was indeed bitter to him. Mr. Gladstone wrote, by return of post, to acknowledge his "very grave letter," which he thought ought to be laid before the Cabinet. "With regard to your leaving Ireland," the Prime Minister continued, "there is an analogy between your position and mine. Virtually abandoning the hope of vital change for the better during the winter, I come on my own behalf to an anticipation projected a little further into the future—that after the winter things may mend, and that my own retirement may give facilities for the fulfilment of your very natural desire."

It was a day or two after this that, in another letter, Mr.

Gladstone congratulated Forster upon the manner in which he had accomplished a difficult and delicate piece of work in connection with the Irish Executive. "It is not every man," he wrote, "who in difficult circumstances can keep a cool head with a warm heart; and this is what you are doing." Words like these must have encouraged him; for in Ireland the prospect was very dark, and in England his opponents—some of whom professed to be his own friends—were very active. The outrages were increasing in number, although the powers of the Protection Act were now being used with an unsparing hand, and large additions were being made to the prisoners in Kilmainham and elsewhere. But it was not merely the league and its emissaries, social and open, with whom he had to contend. He had done his best to give effect to Mr. Gladstone's wish, and to rally the loyal part of the population in support of the law, and he had found that party feeling ran far too high to make any such movement possible. The landowners were bitter against the Government, and the Tory aristocracy of Ireland heaped reproaches upon the Chief Secretary because he was not resolute enough and severe enough in his action against the followers of the league. In England he was being assailed for having suspended constitutional government, and already a faction of the Liberal party were demanding his removal from his post, on the ground that he was neither more nor less than a despot. Nobody knew better than he did that he was governing rather as an absolute than as a Constitutional ruler; and nobody deplored the fact more strongly. He was not unprepared for the unfriendly criticisms of those who, being either unable or unwilling to take the difficulties of his position and the necessities of the Irish problem into account, called him sharply to task for his violation of the fundamental commonplaces of the Liberal creed. But it was, perhaps, still harder for him to have to submit to the ignorant and, in some cases, insolent censures of those men who, while regarding themselves as the bulwarks of law and order in Ireland, refused to lift a finger in order to aid the Government in the work of maintaining that law and order, and contented themselves with criticizing every step taken by the Executive.

Here, for example, is a letter addressed by a peer of wealth and great influence to Mr. Forster during the month of November, 1881: "We, who are anxious to support the Lord-Lieutenant and his advisers in maintaining law and order in this country, cannot understand the action of the Government in remitting the sentence passed upon the brutal murderer of

a peace-officer on duty. At a moment when perverse magistrates and perverse juries are straining the law against the constabulary, this mistaken clemency is a direct encouragement to the disorderly and disaffected masses to continue their career of violence. Every release of a suspect, every remission of a sentence in such a case, is a triumph to the lawless at the expense of the law-abiding." This crude attempt to incite Forster and the Executive to a course of relentless severity, without regard to the merits of each particular case, affords a fair sample of the character of the support which the Castle had during that winter from many of those who posed as the special champions and representatives of law and order. In his reply to this letter, Forster, after referring the writer to the Lord-Lieutenant on the question of the remission of a capital sentence, continued, "For the arrests and release of suspects I am responsible, and to the best of my belief I have had good reasons for my action in every case, and I cannot consider that it would be either wise or just to lay down the rule which you suggest that every release of a suspect is a triumph to the lawless. There could, in my opinion, be no greater triumph to the lawless than the departure of the Government from the impartial consideration of each case on its merits."

The "impartial consideration" of the cases of the suspects was indeed one of the heaviest pieces of work imposed upon him at this time. He was in constant consultation with his law advisers upon each individual case. The fact that these men were imprisoned at *his* pleasure, and that his alone was the voice that could order their release, laid upon him a responsibility the extent of which he never sought to underestimate; and in spite of taunts and sneers on the one side, and threats, abuse, and entreaties on the other, he strove resolutely, with a dogged tenacity and perseverance, to do justice towards each of the hundreds of men who now lay in gaol under his warrant. Their detention, moreover, imposed upon him a heavy amount of detail work. Unconvicted and untried, they could not be treated as guilty men, and he was most anxious in his dealings with them to show all the consideration and forbearance consistent with the faithful discharge of his duty to the State. Daily there came to him applications for some relaxation of the prison rules, for permission to receive particular visitors, or even to quit the prison on parole; and each of these was carefully considered, and dealt with on its merits. The health, too, of the suspects was constantly noted, and whenever it could be shown that confinement was seriously injuring the suspect, his release was ordered.

In this manner Mr. Sexton was released from Kilmainham, after his imprisonment had lasted but a few weeks.

But pressing and urgent as were the duties which were thus accumulated upon Forster's head at this time, he might have discharged them all with comparative ease if it had not been for the pain inflicted upon him by the social demoralization of the country. Day after day he had to listen to stories of outrage, intimidations, ingratitude, and ruin. The personal appeals he received from the victims of the terror sank deep into his heart. These poor creatures looked to him to save them, as they had done twelve months before. He spared himself in their service neither by day nor by night. At every hour of the day he was engaged in stimulating the magistrates and the other executive officers to a more vigorous discharge of their duties; he was constantly conferring with the military authorities on the subject of reinforcements to lighten the work of the overtasked constabulary, and he was keeping up regular communication, not merely with his principal advisers and agents at the Castle, but with the representatives of the Crown in all parts of the country. Only those who were with him then can know how heavy the burden laid upon him was—the double burden of work and responsibility. "They talk of the Czar of Russia," he said one day after his retirement from office, "but the Czar is not more of a personal and absolute ruler than I was during that last winter in Ireland. My colleagues left me to do as I pleased, and the whole thing was on my hands." It seemed to those who were watching him at this time, whilst dangers, difficulties, and embarrassments accumulated around him, that he was trying to do the work not of one man but of ten.

At last the strain began to tell, even upon his great strength and power of work. During December the entries in his daughter's diary regarding him refer frequently to his worn and weary appearance. He found himself, for the first time in his life, lapsing into an occasional short doze, even when persons were engaged with him on business. The burden was very heavy, and the gloom was deepening.

A graphic outside sketch of Mr. Forster's opinions at this critical period is to be found in a letter written by one of his relatives, Mr. Andrew Johnston, who was his guest for a few days.

“December 14th, 1881.

“DEAR ———,

“We left London in a greasy fog, and passed through sharp frost in the shires to half a gale of wind at Holyhead. We got here to breakfast. At twelve I walked to the Park gates (about two miles) with W. E. F. He seemed in good form, resolute and clear, and talked very freely. First he showed me the Under-Secretary's house, marvelling that I did not know about him. His name is Burke, and he virtually is what people talk about as ‘the Castle.’ I then asked him whether there would not be a difficulty in keeping M.P.'s locked up during the session. He said it would be awkward, no doubt; but it had already been done in Dillon's case, and that, whatever might be said, he had to secure the peace of the country; and that was of immeasurably greater importance than avoiding a taunt; that he had no power to deport them to England, and if he had, and they returned by the next boat, he could not arrest them again unless they did some overt act. He is hatching a plan (which is not yet out, and must not be spoken of in public) to put one good man (I suppose a high constabulary officer, or stipendiary magistrate) over pairs of counties, giving him great powers, and making him responsible for the peace there. He has nearly carried this through, with a terrible slaughter of red tape in the process.

“Then as to boycotting; it was very doubtful if it came within the Act, but the lawyers have held that it does, and wherever the inspectors reported it prevalent, and due to League organization, he has arrested the ringleaders (fifty or sixty altogether), and it has had an excellent effect. Of crime there is less than this time last year.

“. . . He agreed that Mr. Gladstone might have mentioned the Property Defence Association at Leeds, but it had then done very little. What had been to the front was the Emergency Committee, and that was a purely Orange emanation, which made it very difficult for him to pat it on the back. He approved of the Lord Mayor's Fund, and had encouraged the bigwigs to support it; but agreed that the detestable tone of the Tory papers, making out that it was to do what *Government* ought to do, made it very difficult for a Liberal to support it. He said that, throughout, the Tory papers had ignored *Ireland* altogether, except so far as they could use it as a weapon for party warfare. Also that the landlords were very remiss in taking their own part. The Government wish them to serve notices and proceed to evic-

tions in the worst cases only, asking them to do it on a systematic plan, so that they may always be ready to back them with overwhelming force; but they won't in many cases. He is increasing the proportion of military to police in these expeditions, to the disgust of the Horse Guards, but to the setting free of the constabulary for night patrol duty. . . . As to compensation to landlords, I asked him whether the real answer to the claim was not that on the whole they are greatly benefited by the Act, as they would not get any rents at all without it? He said certainly. No Government in the world, be it Noah, Daniel, or Job (to say nothing of Bismarck or Jim Lowther), could collect all the rents in perpetuity. Troops may carry out evictions, but they cannot stay there to prevent reoccupation. A *modus vivendi* with the tenants is essential to the landlords, and that could not be acquired at a less cost than the Act."

To MR. GLADSTONE.

Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin,

December 11th, 1881.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"To-day all I can do is to return Lord ——'s letter. To some extent his letter is an exaggeration. Many of the nightly attacks are shams, got up as an excuse for non-payment of rent; but there are others of great atrocity. I believe I am doing all that can be done to secure more efficient patrolling. . . . I have also been doing my best to get processes served by post instead of by escort, and enclose circular also on that matter. I also enclose an advertisement for temporary police.

"I am planning also another step, which I hope to carry out this week, which is to divide the district counties into, say, six districts, and to appoint in each district a temporary commissioner who shall be responsible to me for the peace of his district and for the aid of all the powers which the Executive possess.

"This means breaking through many etiquettes and many yards of red tape, but I think it now a necessity.

"There will be a slight pull upon the Treasury, but not much. I have been talking to Spencer about it, and he fully agrees.

"Yours very truly,

"W. E. FORSTER."

This appointment of "special magistrates" he justly regarded as one of the most important of all the measures which he took for the maintenance of law and order whilst in Ireland. It enabled him to give the ablest men in the service—such men as Mr. Clifford Lloyd and Mr. Blake—free scope for their energies; and unquestionably its good effect—not fully felt until after his own retirement from office—began to make itself apparent very soon after the step was taken.

Amid all that engaged his attention at this time he did not forget his old friends.

To MRS. C. FOX.

"Chief Secretary's Lodge, Dublin,
"December 22nd, 1881.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"From day to day I have put off thanking thee for thy precious note of the 11th inst., and for the accompanying gift of Caroline's 'Journal,' in the hope of being able to say how I value this gift, both in itself and from thee. But I have no time to do anything except my work, and not time for that.

"Little did these dear friends of my youth—she and Barclay and Anna Maria—think what would fall on their companion in after-life, in responsibilities, abuse, and difficulty.

"I have to struggle very hard for law and justice against every kind of injustice and selfishness and unreason; but I am more and more hopeful that, in the end, truth and order will prevail. Meantime, it is pleasant to be so vividly reminded of that bright, clear intellect, with its quick perceptions and graceful wit, and of that warm, unselfish heart; and it is touching to have her brother, whose friendship is one of my bright memories, again brought before me; and I love to have thee and thine, my dearest friend, in my thoughts when I can think of anything but Land Leaguers and outrages and evicted tenants. But I do often think of thee in thy bed of sore sickness and pain, and feel for thee and grieve for thee, and also am thankful for thee that thou art preserved in patience to endure, and to be yet, as of old, a help to those around thee.

"But I must hasten into the Castle, and so can only end with dear love and sincere thanks.

"Thy very affectionate friend,
"W. E. FORSTER."

"A quiet Christmas," wrote Mr. Gladstone on December 23rd "I dare not wish you; but I do hope and think this Christmas will come to you not without consolations and the apparent dawn of favourable expectations." "Mine is a more modest wish," said Forster when, on the morning of January 1st, 1882, some one wished him a "happy new year:" "it is that it may be a less bad year than the last."

CHAPTER XXII.

CLOSING DAYS IN IRELAND.

IN the early part of January, 1882, Mr. Forster crossed to London in order to meet his colleagues and discuss the Irish question and its difficulties with them. The opportunity furnished by his presence in England was seized by the Queen to invite him to Osborne, and he was thus enabled to explain personally to her Majesty many circumstances connected with the administration of Irish affairs on which it was hardly possible for those at a distance to form an accurate judgment. His visit cheered and strengthened him, and he returned to Ireland, on January 11th, in good spirits.

Yet the most trying and anxious days of his official career were now approaching. The meeting of Parliament was at hand, and already it had become evident that the session would be a stormy one. In all quarters attacks upon the Chief Secretary seemed to be in course of preparation. The Protection Act had not put an end to the outrages, despite the fact that hundreds of prisoners, including Mr. Parnell and other members of Parliament, were now under lock and key. The appointment of special magistrates, which was the most important step Mr. Forster had taken for the purpose of strengthening the hands of the authorities, had just been made, and its full effects could not yet be perceived. Above all, the Protection Act would expire during the year, and consequently ministers must either decide to allow it to lapse, or must ask Parliament to spend weeks or possibly months in renewing it. There is no need to feel surprise at the fact that people began openly to talk about the "failure" of coercion as administered by Mr. Forster. A large section of the Radicals had consented with great reluctance to the policy of the Protection Act. They now pointed eagerly to its failure to put an end to outrages as a proof that Ireland could not be dealt with successfully in this manner. There were others who, without

denouncing every species of coercion, were eager to charge upon the head of Mr. Forster himself the full responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of things in Ireland. These were to be found among the men who had on many previous occasions differed from him, and who seemed eager now to seize the opportunity of striking at him. It is certain that small allowance was made in some quarters for the overwhelming difficulties of the situation, and that an ignorant impatience prevailed among men who seemed to believe that the Irish question was one which any capable administrator might solve in the course of a single winter if he only gave his mind to it.

Up to this point, though Forster had been bitterly and indeed brutally attacked by the Nationalist party in Ireland, his chief opponents in England had been the landlords, and those who accused him of being too gentle in his methods of dealing with Irish lawlessness. Now, however, he had to submit to the attacks of those who professed to be his own political friends and supporters. From the very earliest days of his Chief Secretaryship it had been the manifest desire of Mr. Parnell and his party to separate him from his colleagues. The English public was asked to believe that the Irish policy of the Government was not the policy of Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Bright, or Mr. Chamberlain, but the policy of Mr. Forster alone, and every effort was made to alienate from the Chief Secretary the sympathies of his own party. Hitherto, these attempts had met with a very partial and limited success; but as the long, dark winter of 1881 crept slowly onwards, and as day by day brought fresh tales of horror from the centres of agitation in Ireland, the policy of Forster's enemies began steadily to advance, and some of the most bitter and uncompromising of his critics showed themselves among writers and speakers attached to the Liberal party in England. One word must be said here upon the proposition set forth with so much zeal in certain quarters in this country, that the Irish policy of the Ministry down to this winter of 1881-82, had been the policy of Mr. Forster alone. The statement is absolutely false. Upon Forster's shoulders were laid the labour and the responsibility—one may add the odium also—of carrying that policy into effect; but it was a policy deliberately adopted by the Cabinet as a whole. Nay, in some respects it was more fully the policy of his colleagues than of himself. In the one great struggle which had taken place within the Cabinet, that of the autumn of 1880, it was Forster who had been compelled to yield. The fact will be made clear in the subsequent course of this narrative by the letters which I am permitted to publish,

but it is well that at this point, when I am dealing with the attacks which were made upon Mr. Forster by powerful Liberals in England, I should state the truth. During January and February, 1882, when day by day Forster found himself assailed with almost as much bitterness in the press of London as in the Nationalist press of Dublin, and when every effort was being made to induce the English people to believe that he alone was responsible for the failure to restore peace and contentment in Ireland, he was manfully striving to carry out the policy of the Cabinet as a whole.

When Parliament met, on February 7th, there was a gleam of brightness visible amid the deep gloom that brooded over Ireland. The number of outrages was diminishing. In December, 229 outrages, exclusive of threatening letters, had been reported, as compared with 257 in the month of November, and 385 in December, 1880. January showed a further reduction to 189; and it was made clear that the appointment of the special magistrates was beginning to have some effect. In the Queen's Speech it was stated that "the condition of Ireland showed signs of improvement, and encouraged the hope that perseverance in the course hitherto pursued would be rewarded with the happy results which were so much to be desired." The administration of justice, the Speech declared, had been more efficient, and organized intimidation was diminishing.

But though there was thus evidence of some improvement in the general condition of the country, it cannot be said that in his personal experiences Forster had at this time much reason to congratulate himself. Not only was it evident that a party existed in England which was determined to discredit him and drive him from office, but it also became clear that the anger of the extreme members of the revolutionary party in Ireland had reached a dangerous pitch, and that at any moment they might seek to avenge themselves upon the man who was the representative of English rule in Dublin. It was at this time that the attempt to injure Forster by means of an explosive letter, of which an account by his private secretary, Mr. Jephson, is given on a previous page, was made; and the police knew that desperate men were banded together for the purpose of procuring his assassination. In London, as well as in Dublin, the authorities had grave reason to fear for his safety, and they insisted upon taking precautions to guard him against outrage. Unfortunately they could not guard him against trials which were infinitely harder to be borne than any risk of murder. All through his tenure of office he

had been compelled again and again to complain of the mistakes of subordinates in Ireland. It sometimes seemed, indeed, as though equally in small things and in great a perverse fate pursued the Executive. Immediately after coming to town for the meeting of Parliament an annoying incident occurred, which attracted not a little notice at the time. This was the publication, under the authority of the Land Commission, of a pamphlet entitled, "How to become Owner of your Farm," in which the suppressed Land League was extolled. There is no need to go into the particulars of the affair, which led to the resignation of the solicitor to the Land Commission, Mr. Fotterel, but it was one which at the time added greatly to Forster's anxiety.

Attacks upon his administration began with the debate upon the address. Three Irish members, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. O'Kelly, were in prison, and this fact alone seemed to the Parnellite members to justify the most direct and uncompromising attacks upon the Irish policy of the Government. Forster spoke during the second night of the debate on the address in his own defence. In the course of his speech he made it clear that in his eyes the worst offence of Mr. Parnell was not the advice which he had given to the Irish people, but the means by which that advice was being enforced by his followers, namely, intimidation, boycotting, and outrages. It was because he believed that Mr. Parnell had incited to intimidation that he had felt it necessary to advise his arrest. It was for the same reason that he had been compelled to suppress the Land League. In concluding his speech, Forster took occasion to refer to the sub-commissioners who were engaged in carrying out the work of the Land Court. The appointment of these officials had been one of the most serious pieces of work laid upon him in the previous autumn, and he had been freely criticized alike by the landlord party and the tenants for the choice he had made. Some of the sub-commissioners might have given reason by their proceedings for these criticisms; but in the main they had done their work admirably, and Forster gave the House a warm justification of their character and conduct.

It was not in the House of Commons alone, however, that the Irish policy of ministers was attacked. In the House of Lords a motion was brought forward by Lord Donoughmore for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act—which had been barely four months in operation! In spite of the strenuous protests of the representatives of the Government in the Upper House, the resolu-

tion was carried by 96 votes to 53. Here was a direct attack upon the Act of the most formidable kind, an attack different indeed in character, but equal in gravity to that which had been made upon the same measure by Mr. Parnell. The House of Lords had the right to appoint such a committee if it pleased; but ministers, also exercising their right, refused to take any part in its work, or to be represented upon it. The committee had power to summon any persons it pleased as witnesses, and it was evident that it also lay within its power to stop the working of the Land Act at the most critical moment. A question immediately arose as to whether, if Mr. Forster were summoned to give evidence before the committee, he should obey the summons.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“80, Eccleston Square, S.W., February 26th, 1882.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I was sorry to learn from Hamilton, this afternoon, that Northcote appears determined to resist all compromise. I confess, I begin to think that Harcourt is right, and that a minister ought not to be put in the position of defending himself before a committee.

“Of course, if the House of Commons appointed such committee after resistance by the Ministry, the whole Ministry would resign, and, if the Ministry did not resist such motion, the attacked minister would resign.

“The question is, Am I to attend before the Lords’ Committee and there defend myself? For instance, am I to answer such questions as these? ‘For what reasons did you appoint the sub-commissioners? What pains did you take to ascertain their fitness?’

“I doubt whether a minister ought to allow himself to be tried by a committee of the House of Lords. If not, there are two modes of meeting this matter: (1) I could cease to be a minister—but I fear that course is not possible—would it were; or (2) the Government might oppose the motion for leave for me as member of the House to attend before the committee.

“Upon that motion I could challenge attack in the Commons, and declare my anxiety to defend myself in my own House. It is by no means certain that the Lords’ Committee will summon me to attend; and if they do, I do not know that my refusal to attend is precluded by the words Granville used on Friday.

“ I am sure you will feel that I do not raise the question from any personal feeling, but simply from the wish that the position of a minister should not be unduly assailed.

“ Yours very truly,
“ W. E. FORSTER.”

The Cabinet decided that it would be better on the whole for Mr. Forster to refuse to attend before the committee. The challenge of the Lords was taken up by the Government in the House of Commons, and a resolution moved by Mr. Gladstone, declaring that any inquiry at that time into the working of the Land Act would defeat its operation, and must be injurious to the interests of good government in Ireland, was carried by a majority of 303 to 235.

Whilst this controversy was being carried on between the Government and the House of Lords, Mr. Forster was engaged in very different work at a distance from London. The state of things in the county of Clare was exceptionally bad. The south-west, indeed, was the centre of outrage and resistance to the law. Forster determined that he would himself go down into Clare, Limerick, and Galway, in order that he might see the state of the country with his own eyes. When he first expressed his intention of making the journey, not a little opposition was offered by his colleagues, who were naturally anxious lest he should suffer violence whilst visiting places so notorious in the annals of political and agrarian crime. Their anxiety was increased by the fact that he was determined, as far as possible, to do without police protection. Nevertheless he persisted in his purpose, and his journey to Clare, so far from ending in the dreaded disaster, formed one of the brightest incidents in his career as Chief Secretary. There is no need to dwell upon the personal courage which was shown in facing dangers the reality of which was brought home, in only too terrible a manner, to the mind of the country a few weeks later. Nor is it necessary to add more than a few words to the picture of his journey as it is given in his own letters. He had made up his mind to see the worst that could be shown in Ireland with his own eyes; he was anxious, too, to come into close contact with the people of a district where the terror of the Land League seemed supreme. So he set forth on his journey with great confidence in an over-ruling Providence; his chief anxiety being lest, in spite of his orders to the contrary, a police escort might be provided for him.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

Limerick, March 1st, 1882.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“My private secretary will send you a copy of my letter to Cairns, written as you suggest. Lloyd has met me here, and I think I do right to go on to Clare.

“It is very difficult to realize the real position without a personal visit, and no doubt this district in East Clare is just now the worst in Ireland—being possessed by a secret society, partly treasonable, partly murderous.

“I heard good news as I came down. I met at Limerick Junction one of the largest agents in the south, a man whom I know to be a very reasonable one, who told me he had just got in rents on a large estate near Tipperary on the agreement of three-fourths down and twenty-five per cent. to depend on the Land Court. This is important, as when I was in Ireland last week Tipperary town and neighbourhood was the worst district in the counties of Tipperary, Waterford, and East Clare.

“If we can get Clare quiet I shall be hopeful.

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.

“My private secretary at Irish Office will know my address.”

To his Wife.

“Tulla, March 2nd, 1882.

“I must send one line, my dearest, though only one line. We drove over last evening, a wild drive of twenty miles in a storm of rain—three cars of police pursuing us. I did all I could to diminish the number. . . .

“Here we have a small public-house, kept by the only loyal man in the place—an Orange-Protestant from Derry, now vehemently boycotted.

“To-day I have been seeing head constables from the neighbourhood; the poor man in the workhouse hospital who was nearly shot to pieces last Saturday, and who must, I fear, die; the policeman who was hit when Lieutenant Lloyd was fired at; the Dispensary doctor, etc.

“We drove out to call on Colonel O’Callaghan—finding him barricaded as Becher described, but now guarded by Scots Greys instead of police. . . . I have now made a long call on the priest and his curate, who tell me the other side. There

is another side ; but I have given them my mind, as I did in a short speech to a number of men I found under a shed ; . . . I am very well, liking the picnic ; my bed a mattress on seven chairs, but comfortable.

“ Thine,
“ W. E. FORSTER.”

The short speech which Forster made under the shed at Tulla has been described with graphic force by Captain Ross, of Bladensburg, who was one of his attendants during the journey. Quite unaccompanied, Forster, when returning from his call on the priest, walked to a shed where he saw a number of men sheltering from the rain, told them his name, and then in pithy and forcible terms remonstrated with them on their silent acquiescence in the reign of terror organized by the agitators. The men, who received him with looks of surprise, heard him in silence, and uncovered their heads respectfully when, having spoken his mind, he left them.

To his Wife.

“ Athenry, March 3rd, 1882.

“ Just now this is the worst bit of Galway, but it is fair day, and I have been in among the crowd by myself, chatting with a ring of men around me. . . .

“ We had a cypher telegram at Tulla yesterday which greatly perplexed our wits ; but the result was that I telegraphed to Cairns that, having heard from my colleagues, I cannot consent to attend the committee. We had no police escort yesterday from Tulla to Ennis. It cleared up, and I had a pleasant drive in Lloyd’s dog-cart for ten miles.”

From H. O. ARNOLD FORSTER, written at the same time.

“ Our first point in our drive was to the workhouse, where father visited the poor fellow who was so brutally attacked the other day. I am afraid he was dying. It was a painful and dreadful sight, and made doubly so by the poor man’s pathetic story of the outrage—of his wife’s appeal to the murderers to spare him, and by his sorrow on behalf of his six little children. Father gave him £10 for his wife, and said a few words to him which I am sure must have comforted him not a little, and which indeed touched everybody . . . To-day we are on our way to Athenry. Father is very well, and glad to have come here. People, of course, eye him very curiously, but everybody has been civil enough.”

To his Wife.

“Limerick Junction, March 4th, 1882.

“One very short line to say we are quite well, and I am more cheery about the country than I have been since I came down. Rents are being paid in the worst districts, and the worst ruffians are bolting.

“The five special magistrates have just met me here, and all bring good accounts.

“I am very glad to say I have just got a telegram from Jephson, with a message from Gladstone that I need not come back for Monday’s debate.

“With dearest love to you all,

“Thine,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

“Portarlington, March 5th, 1882.

“MY DEAREST WIFE,

“We are spending here a quiet, restful day. Mrs. Blake is really a delightful hostess.

“To-morrow morning I go to Tullamore, the centre of the worst part of King’s County, where I hope to make a speech. Blake entirely agrees with me that I must be unpoliced, and trust to the people.”

The journey caused immense excitement in Ireland, and aroused a corresponding degree of interest in England. The spectacle presented by the Chief Secretary, the hated “Buck-shot” of the Parnellites, walking about unarmed and without police escorts in such places as Tulla and Athenry and talking to the groups of farmers and labourers whom he encountered in the streets and market-places, was indeed calculated to excite amazement in the breasts both of Irishmen and Englishmen. Hitherto the belief had been that Mr. Forster’s life was not safe even within the walls of Dublin Castle; whilst, if the Nationalist newspapers were to be credited, the feeling entertained towards him by the overwhelming mass of the Irish people was such that it would have been impossible for him to appear in public without being insulted. Yet here he was, in the worst part of Ireland, meeting with civility, and absolutely unharmed. It is not strange that at the moment people supposed that the dangers of his journey must have been exaggerated, and that after all there was no reason to fear the presence of the political assassin on Irish soil. The Nationalist newspapers, it need hardly be said, pursued him with venomous

abuse whilst he was on this brief but adventurous journey. They misrepresented his motives, and, though unable to deny his courage, they found vent for their rage in declaring him to be a person notorious for ferocious brutality.

It was at Tullamore that the most interesting event connected with the journey took place. Before me, as I write, lies a sheet printed at Limerick, and bearing the following title, "This speech was made by the Right Honourable W. E. Forster, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland, at an open-air meeting in Tullamore, in the King's County, on the 6th March, 1882." Before making his speech, Forster walked alone through the streets, the people eyeing him with unconcealed curiosity, but not offering to molest him in any way. As in the other towns he had visited, he had interviews here with the parish priest and his curates, and with other persons of influence. Then he went to the Convent Schools, and spent some time in examining the girls who were being taught there. By this time his presence in the town was generally known, and a crowd followed him on his way back to the hotel. Tullamore was the centre of one of the "outrage districts." The people seemed too much surprised, however, to do more than stare at him vigorously. Pressing upon his heels, they accompanied him to the hotel, and waited outside in gathering numbers whilst he lunched. After luncheon, he addressed them from the window of the house. It was a speech in its way unique; and it is impossible for any one acquainted with Forster's history not to be carried back when reading it to those early days in Bradford when he was engaged in combating the "physical force" party among the Chartists, and trying to win by reason and persuasion those whom most were disposed simply to abuse.

After a few prefatory words to the Tullamore crowd, he said, "Seeing you here, I should like to say a word or two as to why I have come down from Dublin into the country." [A Voice: "And we admire your pluck!"] "I have been down in Limerick, and in Clare, and in Galway, and the reason why I came down was this, that I wanted to see whether, coming down for myself, and seeing what the state of things was, would enable me to do my work better. My work at this present moment is to prevent men having outrages committed upon them; to prevent their being threatened and ill-treated when going through their daily work; to enable a man to earn his living if he chooses, to earn it without being frightened by anybody else from doing that; and, above all, to prevent, and if possible put a stop to, what has been happening in many

parts of Ireland—I hope not here, but I am afraid there have been one or two cases not far from here,—to put a stop to what has taken place in other parts of Ireland, especially where I have been within the last day or two, viz. those violent outrages, maiming and killing people because they have been doing what they had a perfect right to do, and in some cases because they had been doing what it was their duty to do—paying their lawful debts—or even because they were suspected of it.”

He had come to the conclusion, he went on, that this intimidation might be put down if the people themselves would unite to resist it. “The people of this district have it in their own power to stop these outrages, which are a disgrace to the name of Ireland, and which, allow me to say—for I would not have come here to talk to you at all, if I would not say before your faces precisely and exactly what I would say behind your backs in the Imperial House of Parliament—I have come here to say to you exactly what I would say to you there—namely this, that such things would not happen either in England or in Scotland, and I do not believe they would happen in any country on the continent. There are no more courageous men in the world in battle, under discipline, than are the Irish.” [A voice: “Soft solder. Release the prisoners!”] “Perhaps you will wait until I come to an end. I do not know why you should be angry, if you are, at my saying you are courageous men; but perhaps if you are angry at that you will be pleased with what I am going to say now—that though there are no more courageous men in battle than the Irish, there is one want among the Irish people, and that is the want of moral courage—a want of that determination to stand against a majority round them, or even a noisy or violent minority round them.”

Why did they allow themselves to be terrorized? why did they not unite to stop it? he asked. “A great many of you, I know, must feel that it is doing great harm—that it is interfering with your employment, and that no good can come of it. If that is the case, I say help the Government to prevent these outrages. But whether you do or not, it is our duty to stop them. That is the duty of the Government, and it is specially my duty. And stop them we will.” Assuming that there might be some one in the crowd who looked with approval upon these outrages, he would like to tell him what were the forces arrayed against the authors of the crimes. “They have got the Irish Government—though perhaps they think they can defy that; they have got the Imperial Parlia-

ment; they have got the people of Great Britain, who are determined that these outrages shall cease; and they have got a stronger force against them than the Irish Government, or Parliament, or the British people—they have got against them the force of God's laws."

Mr. Forster then spoke of himself, of the evil which had been spoken of him since he came to Ireland as Chief Secretary, and of his visit to the country at the time of the famine. "I was determined to do what I could, after seeing the misery in the west, to get an alteration in the laws. We have got an alteration in the laws, and all of you will acknowledge that we have now got two boons, as I may say,—I will not call them boons, but two acts of justice, which three or four years ago you did not expect to get. One is that we have men going through the country everywhere who are saying what a fair rent is to be, and in very many cases largely lowering the rent; and the other is that the want of security which the farmers felt in past years no longer exists." He was glad to think that such a change in the laws had been accomplished. But he must speak of another Irish experience of his. "I have just come back from Clare, and I will tell you what I saw there—it will stick in my memory for the rest of my life, as an eviction which I saw thirty years ago will stick in my memory for the rest of my life. I have done all I can to make it unlikely, to make it difficult, that there should be evictions in the future, and I will do what I can to make it difficult that that shall happen again which happened in Clare, which I almost saw happen within the last three or four days. I went, when I was at Tulla, to the workhouse, and there I saw a poor fellow lying in bed, the doctors round him, with a blue light over his face that made me feel that the doctors were not right when they told me that he might get over it. I felt sure that he must die, and I see this morning that he has died. But why did that man die? He was a poor lone farmer. I believe he had paid his rent—I believe he had committed that crime. He thought it his duty to pay. Fifteen or sixteen men broke into his house in the middle of the night, pulled him out of his bed, and told him they would punish him. He himself, lying in his death agony as it were, told me the story. He said, 'My wife went down on her knees, and said, "Here are five helpless children, will you kill their father?"' They took him out; they discharged a gun filled with shot into his leg, so closely that it shattered his leg. . . . Well, I will state that that is a state of things that, so coming on what I have heard, will dwell with me all the rest of my life, and if

I can do anything to prevent these things happening, whatever hard opinion you may think of me or say of me, the time will come when the Irish people will be thankful that they were stopped."

The concluding passage of the speech was as follows:—"I will just end with these words—God save Ireland. . . . God save Ireland from enemies outside her border and from those within. God save Ireland from cruel men, of whatever class they be—and I trust there are very few—grasping landlords, or dishonest tenants, or midnight marauders. God save Ireland from the pestilence that walketh at noon, and the terror that stealeth at night. And I believe that God will save Ireland; for with all her faults there is that amount of virtue among the Irish people—there is that love of their country, that love and devotion of men to their families—that willingness to sacrifice for them, which are abiding and homely virtues that do much to save a country and to enable God's laws to be respected. And with the earnest desire that God may save Ireland, I thank you for having heard me."

There was some applause at the conclusion of the speech, and then some one in the crowd raised a cry, "Let out the suspects!" Forster promptly answered him: "As soon as we can fairly say that outrages have ceased in Ireland, and that men are not ruined, are not maimed, and are not murdered for doing their duty, or doing what they have a legal right to do, the suspects will be released."

Such was the speech at Tullamore, delivered from an open window by the Irish Secretary to a crowd of farmers and labourers. It made a profound impression upon all parties—an impression the depth of which was proved by the extreme virulence with which both the speaker and the speech were abused in the Nationalist press. In England the episode of the tour in the west, and the uncompromising courage and frankness of Forster's language, for a time checked the course of those who were now striving to discredit him. The press was almost unanimous in praise of his action, and when he reappeared in the House of Commons after his visit to Clare, he was received with enthusiastic cheering from the Liberal benches; though he had, at the same time, to submit to a fresh outpouring of abuse from the Parnellites.

"It is really touching," wrote his daughter, Mrs. O'Brien, in her diary (March 8th, 1882), "to see the delight of our Irish friends over the Chief Secretary's journey and his speech. They feel that such an appeal marks a new departure in the relations of an English minister and the Irish people. There

is in father's manner of thinking and speaking about Irish matters and to Irish people an utter absence of British superciliousness and patronizing goodwill, which is felt and appreciated by Irishmen. . . . We had a pleasant family dinner, and heard some interesting details about the journey in the west. The meeting which had turned out so successful an experiment had been on the verge of going quite the other way. The priest of Tullamore had repented of his promise to give his flock notice of the proposed meeting, so that when father arrived on Monday morning he found that nothing had been done in the way of advertisement. Consequently he had to advertise it himself."

Some substantial results followed the visit to Clare. Thus a large land-agent, writing to a member of the Cabinet, shortly after Mr. Forster's return to London, said, "I have had many opportunities of learning the views on Mr. Forster's tour and address from both sides of politicians and all classes. He has done very great benefit by his visit. I find in four different counties within the past four days, rents have been remitted to me without my applying for them, in instances where, on my asking for them at the usual time—early in January—I was requested, in consequence of intimidation, not then to press for the rents. I believe that Mr. Forster's presence and addresses have much lessened the effect of the dreadful intimidation which is so prevalent in the south and west."

For the moment Forster's courage and energy had checked the movements of his enemies, and caused a revulsion of feeling in his favour among many who had been joining in the attacks which were now so persistently made upon him in certain quarters in England. The battle was still, however, a terrible one in Ireland. The special magistrates were doing their best, but the progress which they were making in their struggle with the party of disorder was barely perceptible. The suspects in prison now numbered 872, and it seemed as though that number must be indefinitely increased before any real impression could be made upon the lawless elements in Ireland. But it was not merely the present that weighed heavily upon the Chief Secretary. In the future there loomed a difficulty of the most formidable kind—the necessity of renewing the Protection Act. The House was at this time engaged in considering the Rules of Procedure proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and the Irish members had been quick to see in these rules a weapon to be used against them when the time came. They had coalesced with the Tory opposition, and were now fighting vigorously to prevent any restriction of the rights of individual

members. The opponents of Mr. Forster took advantage of this state of things, in order to insist upon the fact that the Liberal Government must either abandon the Chief Secretary or submit to certain defeat in the not distant future. On March 24th, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Forster, who was then in Dublin, reporting to him the growing opposition to the ministerial proposals for instituting the closure, and the prevalent belief among the Irish sympathizers in the House that by stopping the closure they might prevent the renewal of the Protection Act. The Prime Minister added his opinion that "with the Land Act working briskly, resistance to process disappearing, and rents increasingly and even generally though not uniformly paid, a renewal of so odious a power as that which we now hold *is* impossible, and that whatever may be needed by way of supplement to the ordinary law must be found in other forms."

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Dublin Castle, March 25th, 1882.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"The reason why I did not mention your proposal to — is this. He could not make the speech you suggest without our assent, either tacit or expressed. In fact, the speech without our assent would not carry a vote; but such assent would not only pledge us to non-renewal of the Protection Act, but would oblige us to release at once. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to keep the suspects in prison, if we let it be supposed that we shall not ask for renewal.

"Nor do I think we can as yet pledge ourselves to non-renewal. It is true that the Land Act is working, that there is no open resistance to processes, and that rents are increasingly paid; but outrages continue, and the Protection Act is our best weapon against secret societies and also against boycotting.

"Undoubtedly the Protection Act has checked, though it has not prevented, outrages. For instance it is only by actual arrest in Loughrea that we have checked actual murder.

"Then, again, there is the question of time. Ireland will certainly be ungovernable if we give up the Protection Act, without replacing it by other strong measures. If, therefore, we let it be known that it will be given up, and therefore deprive it of power, we must be prepared, simultaneously with our statement, to bring in our replacing bill.

“Are we prepared to give the Parliamentary time for this?”

“It is too early to form a definite opinion, but my impression is (1) that late in the session we shall bring in a bill supplementing the ordinary law, and renewing the Protection Act for a year, if possible for a less time; but (2) that we should pledge ourselves to release all the suspects on the passing of such bill, stating at the same time that we could not face the recess without the power of rearrest if absolutely necessary. I am well aware of the great importance and urgency of the approaching division, but I trust we shall not buy votes by any concession to the Parnellites. I see signs everywhere of the approaching defeat of the conspiracy, but we are in the crisis of the conflict, and any such concession just now would be fatal.”

This letter speaks for itself as to the situation and the nature of the new difficulties which Forster had to meet. The exigencies of a party had to be considered as well as the needs of a country. The opponents of coercion saw their opportunity, and eagerly made use of it. On the one hand, they sought to bring pressure to bear upon ministers by threatening them with defeat on the question of the closure if they did not distinctly repudiate any intention to renew the Protection Act; and, on the other hand, they filled the air with declarations of the failure of Mr. Forster's policy in Ireland, and with rumours of his impending supersession, the minister generally designated as his successor being Mr. Chamberlain. To add to the difficulties of the situation in Parliament, a section of the Tories had shown a disposition to coquet with the Parnellites, and an ex-minister, Sir John Hay, had placed a motion against the continuance of coercion on the notice-paper. The Chief Secretary's difficulties in Ireland, it need hardly be said, were not lightened by these cross-currents of political strife in London.

On March 28th, whilst the question of the carrying of the closure was still in suspense, Mr. Sexton brought forward a demand for the release on parole of the three imprisoned Irish members, in order that they might vote in the coming division. Mr. Forster, in declining to comply with this request, pointed to the criminal outrages which were still being committed in Ireland, and, whilst admitting that the Land League was not ostensibly guilty of these acts, regretted that it had made no persistent effort to discourage them, and intimated that if they continued the Government would be forced to resort to more stringent measures to uphold the law and to restore confidence.

The question of a renewal of the Protection Act, or of any further amendment of the law in the direction of coercion, had not, at this time, been considered by the Cabinet, and some of his colleagues were dissatisfied by his use of language which seemed to imply that a decision of this kind had already been arrived at. Mr. Gladstone wrote (March 29th), requesting him to correct the impression which had been conveyed by his speech.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“80, Eccleston Square, London,

“March 29th, 1882.

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I think the best reply to your letter is to send the best report I can find of my speech—that in the *Standard*. It must be read in relation to Brand’s speech, to which I was replying.

“What I meant to convey, and what I believe I did convey, was simply this—that the Government would not be beaten in the contest for law and order, and I really think it was necessary to say that much.

“I could not but suppose this was the unanimous feeling of the Cabinet. . . .

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Ministers were not beaten when the critical division on the closure took place (March 30th). On the contrary, they had a majority of 39. The Easter holidays followed immediately upon the close of the debate, and the House separated with an uneasy consciousness of the fact that Irish affairs were becoming increasingly complicated. Forster’s assailants seized the opportunity afforded by the recess to redouble their attacks upon him, and to demand more boldly than ever his removal from office, and the immediate release of the suspects, whose imprisonment had not, it was evident, prevented the continuance of the outrages. To make matters worse, the American Government became urgent in their demands for the release of those prisoners who could prove that they were citizens of the United States; whilst in addition to the political perplexities thus occasioned, the atrocious murder of an Irish lady, Mrs. H. J. Smythe, as she was driving home from church in Westmeath, sent a thrill of horror through the whole country.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“ Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Dublin,
“ April 4th, 1882.

“ MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“ You may have seen an article in yesterday’s *Pall Mall Gazette* urging my dismissal or resignation.

“ I send you comments by Irish papers. Neither article nor comments matter much, except in so far that any weakening of my authority in Ireland does some harm at this special moment; but this must be met like other difficulties. I seize, however, this opportunity of saying to you what has been on my mind for some time; that if now, or at any future time, you think that *from any cause* it would be to the advantage of the public service or for the good of Ireland that I should resign, I most unreservedly place my resignation in your hands. You might come to this opinion, and come to it on good grounds, without any disapproval of, or indeed disagreement with, my official action; and I earnestly beg of you not to allow yourself to be influenced, for a moment, by any personal consideration for me of any kind whatever.

“ For instance, I must request you to pay no regard to the fact that I should probably appear discredited—to have failed, etc., etc.

“ In making you this request, I know I am asking much from a chief who has so kindly and generously stood by a colleague as you have by me, but the *Pall Mall Gazette* is right in one thing—this is no time for personal considerations.

“ Believe me to remain,

“ Yours very truly,

“ W. E. FORSTER.”

From MR. GLADSTONE.

“ Hawarden Castle, April 5th, 1882.

“ Yesterday morning I was unwell, and did not see the papers, so that I have only just become aware of the obliging suggestion that you should retire. I suspect it is partly due to a few (not, I think, many) Tory eulogies. There is one consideration which grievously tempts me towards the acceptance of the offer conveyed in your most handsome letter. It is that if you go, and go on Irish grounds, surely I must go too. At the winter end of 1880 we might have parted for cause; I do not see how we can now.

“ Using the same frankness as you do, I can convey to you the assurance that so far as my knowledge goes, the notion of

your retirement as a thing desirable has never crossed the mind of one of your colleagues, or of any noteworthy person, unless it be —.

“We must continue to face our difficulties with an unbroken front, and with a stout heart. I do not admit your failure, and I think you have admitted it rather too much—at any rate, by omission; by not putting forward enough the fact that in the main point, namely, the deadly fight with the social revolution, you have not failed, but are succeeding. Your failure, were it true, is our failure; and outrage, though a grave fact, is not the main one. Were there a change in the features of the case I would not hesitate to recognize it, with whatever pain, as unreservedly as I now record their actual condition.

“I do not suppose we ought to think of legislation on the Irish case until after Whitsuntide.”

On the very day on which this frank and generous letter was written by Mr. Gladstone, Forster received another letter from a Kerry gentleman, charging upon him the responsibility for the murder of a Mr. Herbert, by whose dead body this gentleman wrote. Forster wrote a kind letter to his ignorant accuser, whose anger against him provoked no corresponding feeling in his own breast. But these outrages affected his spirits more seriously than anything else. The picture of the dying Michael Moroney as he had seen him in the hospital at Tulla was ever before his eyes, and his inability to save other victims from the atrocious cruelties of the organized assassins struck something like a feeling of despair into his heart. He aged visibly under these trials, which were infinitely greater to him than the abuse heaped upon him by the Parnellites, or the intrigues which were being directed against him in London.

Writing in her diary on April 5th, Mrs. O'Brien mentions how depressed and weary her father had been, and says that Mr. West had told her that night, on returning to the Lodge with him, “that when they got out of the carriage this evening to walk, as father insisted on doing, from the park gates, he seemed much annoyed at finding that two mounted police had been following the carriage. ‘What are those confounded fellows here for? I shall have this stopped.’ Mr. West hopes the police escort will not be discontinued. Dublin, he says, is full of Fenians, and only this evening, as they were driving out of Dublin, he caught sight of two men in a side street leaning forward and peering into the carriage, as if to make sure who was inside.” As a matter of fact, at this time, as was subsequently proved, the secret band of assassins who had

dubbed themselves "the Invincibles" were shadowing Mr. Forster by day and night for the purpose of murdering him.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Chief Secretary's Lodge, April 7th, 1882.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"To the best of my belief, I find the situation in Ireland to be this:—

"1. The November rent—that is, the rent now due—has, generally speaking, been paid, with or without abatement; very often with abatement, and very often upon compulsion or threat of compulsion.

"2. To this payment, however, there are important exceptions—isolated cases of fierce contests, not yet fought out, between landlord and tenants, backed by the Land League; exceptions more frequent and much more important, mainly in Connaught, but in poor districts elsewhere, when the arrears are hopeless.

"3. There is no open resistance to the law.

"4. The Land League has been defeated in its attempt first, to dictate what rents shall be paid; second, to prevent any rent being paid.

"5. There is now much less boycotting, mainly owing to the arrest of the respectable boycotters last autumn as suspects.

"6. Agrarian outrages continue bad. Exclusive of threatening letters, in

| | | |
|------------------------|----------|------|
| Fourth quarter of 1880 | they are | 717 |
| First | " | 1881 |
| Second | " | 1881 |
| Third | " | 1881 |
| Fourth | " | 1881 |
| First | " | 1882 |

But if we take the three worst agrarian outrages, viz. murder, manslaughter, and firing at the person, the statistics are—

| | Murder. | Mau- slaughter. | Firing at the person. | Total. |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Fourth quarter, 1880 ... | 2 | 0 | 13 | 15 |
| First " 1881 ... | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| Second " 1881 ... | 7 | 2 | 16 | 25 |
| Third " 1881 ... | 1 | 1 | 12 | 14 |
| Fourth " 1881 ... | 8 | 0 | 34 | 42 |
| First " 1882 ... | 6 | 0 | 27 | 33 |

I attribute this increase of the most serious agrarian crimes to two causes: (a) the fierce passions evoked by the 'No

Rent' struggle, for which the Land League leaders are mainly responsible ; (b) the immunity from punishment.

"The first cause will diminish in power, unless, indeed, we have to struggle for the May rent as well as for the November rent, as some persons fear ; but other the cause *gains* strength by *continuance*. One of the worst features of recent murders is the slightness of the apparent motive. The intending murderer has little or no fear of punishment. Why ? Because witnesses will not give evidence and juries will not convict ; and Lord Lansdowne is right in saying that a good reason why witnesses hold back is that they will not risk their lives for nothing. 'What,' they say, 'is the use of my giving evidence which no jury will heed ?'

"Now, this being, in my opinion, the situation, what measures would I propose ?

"(1) A vigorous and determined effort to secure convictions of men notoriously guilty. For this purpose I do not think amendment of the jury laws will suffice. We cannot return to the old system of packing juries and tinkering ; such a bitter system of challenging, etc., may be an improvement, but no cure for the present evil.

"I think we cannot stop short of taking temporary powers to try agrarian offences, without jury, by special legal commissioners. It is a question whether this should be done in districts notorious for jury failure, as Limerick, Longford, Kerry, or in cases in which the judge reports after trial that the verdict is against evidence.

"On the whole, I am in favour of the first alternative.

"(2) My next proposal would be in the hope of getting some local support to the Government, if not *for* law, at least *against* crime. There are two directions in which we may aim at this end :—

"Appeal to the localities for material help ; appeal to men to protect themselves and their neighbours. I have tried, and am trying, very hard for this ; hitherto without success, but I have not yet given up hope.

"Or we may appeal to their self-interest ; that is, fine men for conniving at outrages.

"I am not so sanguine as some of the effect of this provision, but I think it will do real good in creating a public opinion against outrages.

"I would therefore (a) make small districts pay for special police protection ; and (b) give compensation for injury to person, as now given for destruction of property. (c) I would re-enact section twenty-three of the Peace Preservation Act of

1870, enabling arrest of persons out all night under suspicious circumstances. Such re-enactment will make it easier to deal with the Protection Act.

“Can we let this Act expire? I dare not face the autumn and coming winter without it. As yet it is our only weapon against demagogues who try to enforce their unwritten law; the boycotters; the murderous members of the secret societies—this may seem a contradiction to the early part of this letter. The Protection Act does not deter murderers for fear of punishment, but it enables us to lock them up.

“Suspension of trial by jury may, probably will, enable us to deal both with boycotters and murderers, but we must be sure of this before we give up the Act.

“As regards the Land Leaguers, your proposal would enable us to deal with them, and, indeed, an enlargement of the last suggestion in your letter of yesterday would cover my jury proposal. I would renew the Act for a year, and promise to let out the suspects immediately on the passing of our new bill. Let us try if we can do without the Act, but let us keep it in reserve.

“Now as to time. I am well aware of the immense Parliamentary inconvenience of immediate legislation. It is impossible to estimate it; but, unless outrages diminish, we shall be driven to it. Ireland will be forced on our attention by questions, motions, etc.; we shall be forced to show our cards, and, indeed, the Protection Act will become useless unless we say what we are going to do, and if we sketch out or hint at our legislation, men will be very impatient to deal with it.”

From this important letter Forster's view as to the legislative wants of Ireland at that time will be gathered. He virtually believed that not only must the Protection Act be maintained even though it were to be held in reserve, but that additional powers must be given to the Irish Government, in order to enable it to bring undoubted criminals to justice. Of these powers the most important was the suspension of trial by jury. He was anxious, however, that any change in the jury law should be applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom, and the suggestion which found favour both with himself and Mr. Gladstone, was that, in districts which might be proclaimed in the interests of the public peace, cases might be tried either by magistrates or judges according to the gravity of the offence charged. Forster proceeded to draft a bill for extending the powers of the Executive, and, at the same time, in accordance with a suggestion from Mr. Gladstone

and Mr. Childers, he instructed the draftsman to prepare a measure providing for the establishment of provincial councils in Ireland.

The members of the Cabinet were clearly undecided as to the form which the legislation of the year should take. Whilst outrages of the most serious kind were continuing, they could not openly announce their intention to abandon coercion, even if such an intention had been formed; but there was a strong desire on the part of some to have in readiness a large measure of concession to the Irish demand for local self-rule, and it was in response to this desire that steps were taken to frame a Provincial Councils Bill. At this juncture, however, an event happened which, though comparatively trifling in itself, was destined to lead to important results. This was the release of Mr. Parnell on parole.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Chief Secretary's Lodge, Dublin,
"April 10th, 1882.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"Thank you for your letter. I have asked the six special magistrates to come to me to-morrow. After seeing them I will write further about repressive legislation.

"Meantime I am getting my draftsman to make rough drafts of bills.

"I send herewith draft of bill to carry out your and Childers's suggestion of Provincial Councils. It is, of course, merely rough material on which to work. I am sorry to say that I am still of the opinion that it would add fuel to the fire if it were brought forward this year.

"This morning we released Parnell—not for good, but on parole, to attend the funeral of his sister's only child at Paris. I received a telegram from him yesterday afternoon expressing his wish to attend the funeral, and undertaking to take no part in any political matter during his absence. I do not see how we could refuse. The young man was just of age, and, I imagine, his only nephew. . . .

"There is a great pressure for emigration in the west. Tuke, who has gone to Galway to administer the funds raised at the Duke of Bedford's meeting, writes me this morning that he is almost overwhelmed with applications; and I have had a visit from the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toronto, which gives one hope of working the clauses in the act. Emigration is the only hope for the western men."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE KILMAINHAM TREATY—RESIGNATION.

“My six special magistrates,” writes Forster to Mr. Gladstone (April 12th), “all bring me very bad reports. These are confirmed by constabulary reports. The impunity from punishment is spreading like a plague. I fear it will be impossible to prevent very strong and immediate legislation.”

The question of reinforcing the Irish Executive by appointing a Cabinet minister, who had previous experience of Irish affairs, as Viceroy was raised by Lord Cowper's expression of a wish to retire from his post, and it was decided in favour of Mr. Forster's suggestion that Lord Spencer should take the place. At the time when the announcement of the change was made, there was much exultation among Forster's opponents over an event which they regarded as his “supersession.” They were ignorant of many things regarding the story of his Irish administration—just as they were strikingly ignorant regarding the personal character of the man whom they so strangely misunderstood. They were not aware that Forster's earnest desire was to have Lord Spencer as his colleague, in the event of Lord Cowper's retirement.

The reader will understand that towards Lord Cowper, Mr. Forster's feeling was one of warm friendship. Indeed, Forster's biographer would fail in his duty if he did not acknowledge the unceasing harmony of the relations which prevailed between the two men, and the steadfast loyalty and self-sacrifice with which Lord Cowper, who had to fill a most delicate and difficult position, invariably acted towards his distinguished colleague, who, though nominally his subordinate, was really the responsible ruler of Ireland. Still, when the opportunity of making a change occurred, no one felt more strongly than Forster himself the necessity of having some one in Ireland with sufficient authority as a member of the Cabinet, to act on his own independent judgment at times

when the Chief Secretary was compelled to be in London in the performance of his Parliamentary duties.

But before this change could be carried out, a new train of events, which had far-reaching consequences, had been put in motion. On April 15th, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Forster enclosing a letter from Captain O'Shea, an Irish Liberal member of the House of Commons. This letter dealt with the question of evictions for arrears, and was written in a friendly spirit very uncommon at that time in communications made on behalf of the Parnellite party to the Government. The fact which gave importance to the overtures made by Captain O'Shea was that he was known to have intimate personal relations with Mr. Parnell, who was now at liberty on parole.

To MR. GLADSTONE.

“ [Secret.]

“ April 18th, 1882.

“ MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“ I return O'Shea's letter. . . . I do not believe he has the influence either with Parnell or the priests which he claims.

“ I return to-morrow night, and shall therefore be at the Cabinet on Thursday.

“ I sent last night to the printer a full mem. on the condition of the country and on repressive measures, which I trust will be circulated before Saturday.

“ Meantime, may I send you my views about the pressing questions: (1) The arrears. (2) The treatment of Parnell and the other leading suspects.

“ The *Arrears*.—The dangers and difficulties of dealing with the question are great. . . . Nevertheless, I think, with all these dangers and difficulties, we must interfere. The evictions in Mayo and elsewhere are becoming very serious; and many of the poor cottier tenants and many of those who are most rack-rented, feel it useless to resort to the Land Court. The helpless miserable position of these poor men is the foundation of the agitation. I think it useless to re-enact the old clauses. If the time had been extended it would have in many cases been used, but there is one fact which makes it unworkable on an efficient scale—the reluctance of the landlord to make himself liable for a sum which *he* has to receive from the tenant.

“ Will you kindly consider the following plan, which is

really in its main features the only one which seems to me, after much thought, to be workable ?

“(1) Define Arrears, for the purpose of the clauses, to be rent owing for the year before the year’s rent now due.

“It is a question whether we should interpret the year’s rent now due to be year ending last autumn or this spring. Suppose we say last autumn, then our definition of arrears would be so much of the rent accruing from November, 1879, to November, 1880, as is unpaid.

“(2) Upon joint request of landlord and tenant, give from Exchequer, either with or without the Church Surplus Security, such arrears to the landlord on behalf of the tenant.

“(3) On condition that the tenant binds himself to repay the sum with interest in a certain fixed time.

“(4) Make the loan on liberal terms, as regards interest and time of repayment, and make it receivable as part of county cess.

“(5) Give this money to the landlord only on condition of his quittance of all arrears accruing before November, 1880.

“(6) Limit the cases to tenancies at or under — valuation.

“There would be some risk to the Exchequer in this arrangement, but, I believe, no great risk. There would be no compulsion on either landlord or tenant ; but there would be great temptation. The landlord would get money he sorely needs, and the tenant would be able to start fair. I believe, generally speaking, he would arrange with the landlord for the last year’s rent, and I think evictions of the cottier tenants would stop.

“Treatment of Parnell and other *leading* suspects.—I expect no slight pressure for their immediate unconditional release, and if Parnell returns after behaving well, his so acting will be the opportunity for pressure, in which men of different sides may join.

“My own view on this question is clear. I adhere to our statement that we detain these suspects, and all suspects, solely for prevention, not punishment. We will release them as soon as we think it safe to do so.

“There are three events which, in my opinion, would imply safety :—(1) the country so quiet that Parnell and Co. can do little harm ; (2) the acquisition of fresh powers by a fresh Act which might warrant the attempt to govern Ireland with the suspects released ; (3) an assurance upon which we could depend, that Parnell and his friends, if released, would

not attempt in any manner to intimidate men into obedience to their unwritten law.

“Without the fulfilment of one or other of these conditions, I believe their release would make matters much worse than they are. At any rate I am sure I could not, without this fulfilment, administer affairs as Irish Secretary with advantage; but I do not say that it would be impossible for some other man to make this new departure. I thought I had better send you these views before we meet. They are probably badly expressed, as I have had to write against time, but they are the result of long and anxious thought.

“Yours very truly,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

On the following day, April 19th, Mr. Forster's confidential memorandum on the state of Ireland was issued to the Cabinet. It embodied and amplified the facts contained in his letter to Mr. Gladstone. It was not until the 22nd that the Cabinet took up the Irish question, Mr. Forster having by this time returned to London. The most tragical crisis through which English rule in Ireland had ever passed was now close at hand: but no one save the conspirators who were plotting murder in Dublin knew how nearly the tragedy was anticipated on the day on which Forster—as it turned out for the last time—left Dublin Castle in order that he might confer with his colleagues in London. The full truth was not made known until months afterwards, when the country listened horror-struck to the revelations of Carey the informer. Mr. Forster had arranged to leave Dublin by the mail train from Westland Row for Kingstown on the night of April 19th, and his intention to do so had been publicly announced. “While he was eating a sandwich for luncheon,” says Mr. Jephson, “I asked him if he would not come down to Kingstown by an earlier train, and dine at the Royal St. George Yacht Club, of which he was an honorary member, as it would be much pleasanter there than in Dublin. The club being scarcely a couple of hundred yards from the pier whence the mail steamer started, we could dine quietly there and walk to the steamer, thus avoiding the racket and worry of cabs, stations, and trains in Dublin. He hesitated, but said, ‘We'll see how work goes, and whether we can get away in time.’ At about four o'clock I went to him with the last batch of papers to be dealt with. When he had finished his instructions on them, I said, ‘Now, sir, that's the last, and we can go to Kingstown if you like.’ ‘Capital,’ he replied, ‘let us go;’ and accordingly we

left Westland Row Station by the quarter to six o'clock train for Kingstown, dined at the club there, and walked on board the steamer, where we met Mrs. Forster and her daughter, who had come by the quarter to seven mail train, little knowing at the time how dreadful a tragedy had been avoided. At a quarter to seven o'clock, on the platform at Westland Row, there was waiting the gang of desperate men known later as the Invincibles, determined at all hazards to assassinate him; and if he had left Dublin by that train instead of the earlier one, no earthly power could have saved him." In the evidence given at the trial of the murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, it was stated that the wretches carefully examined every carriage more than once in their search for the man they had marked out as their victim, but who was destined to be so marvellously preserved from their hands.

Knowing nothing of this wonderful escape, but inspired by the conviction that the state of Ireland was exceptionally dangerous, owing to the encouragement which outrage-mongers and assassins had derived from the impunity they enjoyed, Forster came over to London, to find the Cabinet willing to allow Mr. Chamberlain to negotiate with Captain O'Shea, not merely with regard to the arrears question, but on the subject of Mr. Parnell's possible release. Ministers, however, were agreed that neither he nor the other leaders could be released unless they gave a public assurance of their resolve, so far as lay in their power, to put an end to intimidation, including boycotting. How strongly Forster felt upon this point is shown in the following letter which he addressed (April 23rd) to one of his colleagues who had a principal part in the communications with Captain O'Shea:—

"As regards condition of release of Parnell and Co., what we want is not their promise to try to prevent outrages, but an assurance by which they will be bound in honour before the public—that is, an undertaking that they will not themselves renew an agitation to replace the law of the land by their law, or to prevent men from the fulfilment of their contracts, or in any way, by boycotting or otherwise, to intimidate them from the full enjoyment of their rights. If we were to release them without getting the country quiet, or a fresh Act, or such assurance, I believe we should make matters worse in Ireland, and be probably turned out ourselves by an indignant House and country, as would be our desert."

The popular excitement on the subject of the Irish policy of the Government had now become very great. Rumours of

a "new departure" in the treatment of the country were widespread; and they received countenance, not only from the report that Lord Spencer was about to become Viceroy, but from the apparent change of tactics in the House of Commons. A bill on the subject of arrears was brought in by Mr. Healy and Mr. Redmond, and on April 26th it was discussed in a very favourable manner by Mr. Gladstone, who saw in the fact that Irish members were seeking by constitutional methods to amend the Land Act, evidence that they were beginning to abandon their attitude of uncompromising hostility to it. The fact that the bill was really inspired by Mr. Parnell, which was well known, evidently strengthened this feeling in Mr. Gladstone's mind. The Irishmen in the House showed a desire to keep their demands upon the arrears question within the bounds of moderation, and it seemed as though new relations were about to be established between the Ministry and the representatives of Ireland.

The formal announcement, on April 28th, of Lord Spencer's appointment as Viceroy was regarded as confirming these rumours; and those journals which had been attacking Mr. Forster's administration now united in speaking of him as discredited and defeated, and confidently anticipated the immediate release of the suspects. At this time, it must be borne in mind, the Tory party showed strong signs of a desire to conciliate the Irish representatives. The *Quarterly Review* had been sneering at "the arrest of suspects by the cart-load;" Sir John Hay had given notice of a motion condemning the Protection Act and the suspension of trial by jury, and Mr. J. K. Cress, on the part of the English Radicals, if not with the direct approval of some of Forster's own colleagues, had notified his intention to move, as an amendment to Sir John Hay's motion, a resolution in favour of the immediate release of Mr. Parnell and his fellow-members. The situation, it must be admitted, was extremely complicated and difficult. Ministers, who had been abused with such vehemence a few weeks before, because they were supposed to be dealing with the Nationalist party in Ireland with criminal leniency, now found that the Tory party was prepared to attack them on the opposite ground; they saw that a powerful section of their own party was bent upon procuring an entire change of policy towards Ireland, involving the abandonment of the Protection Act and the "clearing-out of Dublin Castle"—that is to say, of the permanent members of the Irish Executive; and they believed that they had reason to look for a change of attitude on the part of the Irish leaders, from one of irreconcilable

antagonism to the English Government to one of conciliatory co-operation. It is not surprising that the Cabinet was divided, and that it wavered in its opinion. Mr. Forster, however, stood firm. The ground he took was that, so long as criminal outrages were committed with the tacit approval of the Irish leaders, it would be fatal to make any surrender to them. If Captain O'Shea could obtain a distinct promise from Mr. Parnell, who had now returned to Kilmainham, that he would do what he could to prevent outrage and intimidation in future, then he was prepared cheerfully to acquiesce in his release. But if no such promise was forthcoming, then the suspects could only be released on one condition—the passing of an Act strengthening the hands of the Irish Executive in the manner he had proposed in his letter of April 7th. In a private memorandum on the subject of the answer which he wished to give to Sir John Hay and Mr. J. K. Cross, when they moved their resolution and amendment, he wrote, "What I think I ought to be empowered to say is, that the state of the country is such that we must pass a fresh Act to preserve peace and prevent outrage. We will bring in this bill at once. Upon its becoming an Act we will release all the suspects. We hope we shall not have to rearrest them, but we have power to do so until the Protection Act expires."

These few lines express Forster's opinion with regard to the course which ministers ought to pursue in the circumstances in which they were placed. In the mean time, however, feeling was running strongly in many quarters in favour of the release of Mr. Parnell and the principal suspects, provided any kind of pretext for taking this step could be discovered. Mr. Chamberlain's negotiations with Captain O'Shea were being continued, and Forster saw clearly that—unless the current changed—he must in the end be beaten. He had, at the request of one of his colleagues, given Captain O'Shea permission to see Mr. Parnell in prison, and the result of the interview was eagerly awaited by ministers. Meanwhile he wrote to Mr. Gladstone as follows:—

To MR. GLADSTONE.

"Irish Office, April 29th, 1882.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I fear I must trouble you with my views with regard to the release of Parnell and the other M.P.s, and, indeed, I think I ought to do so before our Cabinet on Monday, especially as it will be followed so soon by the debate

on Tuesday. It is possible that O'Shea may bring back from Dublin a declaration by Parnell, which may be published, that he will not in future aid or abet intimidation, and so expressed as to appear to include boycotting. I do not myself expect this, and if we do not get such public declaration I am very sorry to be obliged to say that I cannot make myself a party to his release, or to that of other suspects, M.P.'s or not, arrested on like grounds.

"I think, unless we get such declaration, or get the country much more quiet, and therefore much more relieved from intimidation than it is at present, or get an Act with fresh powers, we cannot release these men without weakening Government in Ireland to an extent which I do not believe to be safe or right.

"I will not trouble you now with my reasons for this conviction, which I have often expressed to you privately in the Cabinet, especially in last Saturday's Cabinet; and I may be wrong in this conviction, but I hold it so strongly that I shall be compelled to act upon it. I need not say I have come to this conclusion after anxious thought, and much weighing of adverse considerations, of which perhaps the strongest in my mind is reluctance in any way to add to your troubles or embarrassments, but this is one of those matters in which a man must do what he thinks is his duty.

"Yours very truly,
"W. E. FORSTER."

This letter had been written in answer to a note from Mr. Gladstone offering Forster two successive days—Monday or Tuesday, May 1st or 2nd, for a meeting of the Cabinet "to discuss the prospective policy in lieu of coercion." On receiving Forster's intimation of his resolve, Mr. Gladstone wrote, saying, "I take due note of the grave contents of the letter you have just sent me. Were I to make a decision now, it would not be yours, but why decide now at all?"

On the following day, Sunday, April 30th, Captain O'Shea arrived from Dublin, and at once called upon Mr. Forster, at his residence in Eccleston Square. There is no need now to go into the details of the communications which passed between the Chief Secretary and the "ambassador from Mr. Parnell;" but two documents must be given in order to complete the narrative of this singular episode. The first is the account which Forster dictated to his wife immediately after the interview had taken place.

"After telling me that he had been from eleven to five with

Parnell yesterday, O'Shea gave me his letter to him, saying that he hoped it would be a satisfactory expression of union with the Liberal party. After carefully reading it, I said to him, 'Is that all, do you think, that Parnell would be inclined to say?' He said, 'What more do you want? Doubtless I could supplement it.' I said, 'It comes to this, that upon our doing certain things he will help us to prevent outrages,'—or words to that effect. He again said, 'How can I supplement it?' referring, I imagine, to different measures. I did not feel justified in giving him my own opinion, which might be interpreted to be that of the Cabinet, so I said I had better show the letter to Mr. Gladstone, and to one or two others. He said, 'Well, there may be fault in expression, but the thing is done. If these words will not do I must get others; but what is obtained is'—and here he used most remarkable words—'that the conspiracy which has been used to get up boycotting and outrages, will now be used to put them down, and that there will be a union with the Liberal party;' and as an illustration of how the first of these results was to be obtained, he said that Parnell hoped to make use of Sheridan, and get him back from abroad, as he would be able to help him to put down the conspiracy (or 'agitation,' I am not sure which word was used), as he knew all its details in the west. (This last statement is quite true. Sheridan is a released suspect, against whom we have for some time had a fresh warrant, and who under disguises has hitherto eluded the police, coming backwards and forwards from Egan to the outrage-mongers in the west.)

"I did not feel myself sufficiently master of the situation to let him know what I thought of this confidence; but I again told him that I could not do more at present than tell others what he had told me. I may say that, in the early part of the conversation, he stated that he (O'Shea) hoped and advised—and in this case he was doubtless speaking for Parnell—that we should not to-morrow—I suppose meaning Tuesday—'pledge ourselves to any time for bringing on fresh repressive measures.' He also said that he had persuaded Parnell to help to support a large emigration from the west, and that Parnell had told him that he had had a good deal of conversation with Dillon, and had brought him round to be in full agreement with himself upon the general questions."

Mr. Parnell's letter to Captain O'Shea, of which that gentleman gave Mr. Forster a copy, was chiefly taken up with a statement of his views upon the arrears question. The passages relating to the all-vital "pledge" upon the necessity of

which Forster had insisted were as follows:—"If the arrears question be settled upon the lines indicated by us, I have every confidence—a confidence shared by my colleagues—that the exertions which we should be able to make strenuously and unremittingly would be effective in stopping outrages and intimidation of all kinds. . . . The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched out to you would, in my judgment, be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the land question, and would, I feel, soon enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general reform, and that the Government at the end of this session would, from the state of the country, feel themselves thoroughly justified in dispensing with further coercive measures."

Such were the chief points of the document which was afterwards described as the Treaty of Kilmainham. Forster had not disguised his reluctance to countenance the negotiations between Captain O'Shea and a member of the Cabinet. His strong conviction was that the secret bands of outrage-mongers, by whom Ireland was held under the spell of a cruel and demoralizing terror, could not be dealt with by means of any negotiations whatever with the Land League leaders. But if such negotiations were to be carried on with the sanction of the Government, and if Mr. Parnell and his colleagues were to be released, he was at least anxious that the pledge which they gave should be so clear and emphatic as to convince the most ignorant of the Irish cottiers that they were resolutely opposed, not merely to assassination and the more flagrant kinds of violence, but to boycotting and to every species of moral as well as material intimidation. The promises from Mr. Parnell which were conveyed to him by Captain O'Shea failed entirely to meet his conditions; whilst the mention of Sheridan as one of the instruments through whom Mr. Parnell proposed to exercise his influence in preventing outrages, implied, in his opinion, some kind of previous connection between the Irish leader and that notorious person. He immediately forwarded Mr. Parnell's letter and his own account of the interview with Captain O'Shea to Mr. Gladstone, telling him that he had expected little from the negotiations, and found that the result was less even than he had expected. Mr. Gladstone took a different view. Writing to Forster the same day, he expressed the gratification with which he had read the sentence in Mr. Parnell's letter beginning, "If the arrears question be settled." With regard to the expression in the letter of willingness on the part of the writer to co-

operate in future with the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone wrote: "This is a *hors d'œuvre* which we had no right to expect, and I rather think have no right at present to accept. I may be far wide of the mark, but I can scarcely wonder at O'Shea's saying 'the thing is done.' . . . On the whole, Parnell's letter is, I think, the most extraordinary I ever read. I cannot help feeling indebted to O'Shea."

Mr. Gladstone's satisfaction with the letter of Mr. Parnell virtually settled, not only the question of the release of the suspects, but that of Forster's continuance in office. On the following day, Monday, May 1st, the Cabinet met, and it was found that the difference between the Chief Secretary and certain of his colleagues was irreconcilable. He was still willing to allow the release of Mr. Parnell on condition that the new Crimes Bill, which had already been drafted, should be at once introduced; but in the end the Cabinet refused to give way to him on this point. The meeting broke up still leaving the matter in suspense, some of his colleagues yet hoping that a *modus vivendi* might be discovered. To one of these he wrote as follows:—

"Irish Office, Great Queen Street, S.W.,

"May 2nd, 1882.

"MY DEAR ———,

"I have been very anxiously thinking over the suggestion in your kind note, with which I find both ——— and ——— concur. You three are especially good judges of the situation, and I wish I could agree with you—but I cannot.

"I understand the proposal to be—the release of Parnell and the two other M.P.s, and, at the same time, the announcement that fresh repressive measures will be brought in without delay.

"Now, this does not meet my objection. Either the release is unconditional, or it is not. If unconditional, I think it is, at the present moment, a surrender to the law-breakers. If conditional, I think it is a disgraceful compromise.

"The statement that we will bring in a fresh repressive bill, will not, in my opinion, enable me to say that release, under either of these interpretations, will be either right or safe.

"The release will be hailed in Ireland as the acknowledgment of Parnell's supremacy. The 'No Rent' manifesto will be withdrawn, because it has served his object.

"There will be an agitation against the New Coercion Bill, emboldened and strengthened by the defeat of the old bill.

"Moreover, I doubt whether Mr. Gladstone will consent to the immediate introduction of the new bill. I think he will require both Budget and procedure to be first dealt with. And, in fact, I think the course you propose, while it does not meet my difficulties, will increase the difficulties resulting from immediate release.

"However much we may try to hide the fact, release is a new departure, and, if so, let it be made with the probability of success. It is, in fact, a concession to Parnell.

"Do not, therefore, accompany it with an attack upon the party he leads and represents. If there be faith in him, let it be shown, and give him credit for so assisting us to govern the country as to make the repressive measures we contemplate no longer necessary.

"Yours sincerely,
"W. E. FORSTER."

It was after writing this letter that Forster made his final determination known to Mr. Gladstone, who immediately acknowledged it.

MR. GLADSTONE to MR. FORSTER.

"May 2nd, 1882.

"I have received your letter with much grief, but on this it would be selfish to expatiate. I have no choice; followed or not followed, I must go on. There are portions of the subject which touch you personally, and which seem to me to deserve *much* attention. But I have such an interest in the main issue, that I could not be deemed impartial, so that I had better not enter on them.

"One thing, however, I wish to say. You wish to minimize in any public statement the cause of your retreat. In my opinion—and I *speak from experience*—viewing the nature of the cause, you will find this hardly possible. For a justification I fear you will have to found upon the doctrine of 'a new departure,' or must protest against it, and deny it with heart and soul."

Thus came to an end Forster's term of office as Irish Secretary, and his connection with the second administration of Mr. Gladstone. From most of his colleagues he parted with open grief, suffered equally on their side and on his. From Mr. Gladstone especially he parted with profound sorrow. There had from time to time been differences between them

during their official connection, but up to the last moment they had been differences on questions of detail, not of principle; whilst during those terrible months in which Forster had been waging war against the outrage-mongers in Ireland, under a flank fire from English Conservatives and English Radicals, he had received a constant and a loyal and generous support from his chief. It was only when they reached "the parting of the ways," and when Mr. Gladstone had convinced himself of the necessity for a new departure in the policy of the Government towards Ireland, that the two men fell asunder. Speaking of that parting, Forster told the present writer that he had learned not merely to esteem Mr. Gladstone, but to love him, during their intercourse as colleagues, and he bore testimony to the fact that he had never ceased to be supported by him until the moment came when the Prime Minister found reason to change his policy. Then, however, the change of policy was swiftly followed by a change of attitude, so far as politics were concerned, deplored by both men, but under the circumstances inevitable.

At the morning sitting of the House of Commons (May 2nd) Mr. Gladstone briefly announced the new departure upon which ministers had resolved, viz. the release of the imprisoned members and of all suspects not associated with the commission of crime; and stated that this act had entailed upon the Government "a lamentable consequence"—the loss of the services of the Chief Secretary. The news, even though it had been known for some time that the Cabinet was divided in opinion on the Irish question, caused a great sensation throughout the country. For two years Mr. Forster had been in the forefront of the battle on behalf of English law and English rule in Ireland. Many men had differed from him; not a few had criticized him harshly, some had abused him without stint. On the other hand, thousands of his fellow-countrymen, as they watched him pursuing his difficult and dangerous way regardless of abuse and slander, showing all the dogged tenacity of purpose, the patient endurance, and the high personal courage which are characteristic of our English nature, had learned to look upon him as the representative of that which was best and highest in the nation. These mourned over his resignation as openly and sincerely as the Irish members and their allies rejoiced; whilst all waited with eager impatience for an explanation of the event. Probably there were few who knew what his term of office as Irish Secretary had been to Mr. Forster. None save those who stood nearest to him knew at what an expenditure of brain

and nerve, of heart and spirit he had carried on his terrible work. He had gone to Ireland full of hope—full, too, of confidence in his own determination to do his best to win the Irish people to him and to the nation which he represented. Then had come the terrible check to his policy of wise reform and conciliation which was caused by the rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in the House of Lords, and straightway had followed that season of criminal agitation, of cruel outrage, and still more cruel intimidation, in which it had become absolutely necessary, if law and social order were not to be entirely submerged, to abandon the ordinary constitutional safeguards, and to govern Ireland by exceptional laws. From the moment when, sorely against his will, but in the performance of an imperative duty, he had found himself committed to that hateful task, he had realized the fact that so far as his personal share in them was concerned, all his life-long aspirations regarding Ireland had been frustrated. The man who had to administer the Protection Act, the man who was caricatured in every Nationalist newspaper as a monster of tyranny and brutality, the man whose name the very children of Ireland had learned to lisp with loathing, could never hope to accomplish his heart's desire by removing from the breasts of the Irish people the last memory of injustice suffered under English rule.

If he had thought only of himself, Forster would have resigned before ever events had made a Protection Act necessary. It was only because he was loyal to his colleagues and to the duty which they had imposed upon him that he remained at his post during eighteen months of such labour, anxiety, and grief as few ministers of the Crown have ever had to encounter. During that period he strove with all his might to put an end to the reign of terror which prevailed throughout so large a portion of the country. That was his first work, and to it he devoted the greater part of his time and thoughts. But he seized every opportunity of helping on, so far as he could, those remedial measures in the efficacy of which he believed so strongly. The Land Act owed much to him, not only in its inception, but in the manner in which it was afterwards brought into operation. At the time when the struggle with the Land Leaguers was fiercest, he found time to devote several days continuously to the careful study of the qualifications of the many candidates for the post of sub-commissioner, and it was owing to the care which he thus exercised that he prevented the Land Committee from being wrecked at the very outset of its career. All through his

secretaryship he maintained his correspondence with his old friend, Mr. James Tuke, and he was never so happy as when he was able to assist that gentleman in his efforts to relieve the misery of the congested districts of Ireland. The picture of his term of office at Dublin is necessarily one of which the chief feature is his hand-to-hand fight with the Land League and the outrage-mongers. But all through that time, despite the trials and vexations of spirit and temper to which he was constantly exposed, Forster was true to his early career and his life-long sympathies. Nothing diverted him from the task of doing what he could to mitigate the material lot of the Irish poor, without regard to the political opinions which they professed.

Of the manner in which he worked during those two years of office as Irish Secretary, there is little need to speak. He showed even more than the energy he had displayed when he was passing his Education Bill. Hardly any man in public life ever had greater power of work than he had, and certainly none ever spared himself less. "Mr. Forster was a tremendous worker," writes Mr. Jephson. "How his constitution stood it was wonderful. From early morning until late at night he was always at work—not perfunctorily working, but with the whole of his powerful mind given to his task—given to it with an earnestness, a thoroughness, which was one of his most remarkable characteristics. He was always anxious to get every possible information on any subject he had to deal with, and often after a heavy day's work he would have two or three men to dinner, who were best qualified to inform him on the subject in which he was interested, for the sake of getting from them what new light he could about it. His one desire was to master his subject, whatever it might be. His judgment of men was both rapid and true. It took him but a very short time to form his idea of a man's calibre. Of intriguers or humbugs he never concealed his contempt. For the two years he was Chief Secretary, his life was one of most tremendous pressure: no rest, no relaxation, except a holiday so short as scarcely to deserve the name, when Parliament rose, or a very occasional game of whist at his club. The whole burden of the government fell upon his shoulders. Wearing himself out with work which, from its nature, involved great anxiety, never getting rid of one task except to find another and a heavier one in its place, interminable debates in Parliament, endless subjects of heated discussion, the innumerable daily questions of Irish government—all these had to be faced. Yet he never showed the least sign of flinch-

ing from the labours, or responsibilities, or dangers of his post. Everything—ease, comfort, health—was sacrificed that he might perform his duty.”

To this tribute, from one who shared as well as witnessed his labours and his dangers, it is unnecessary to add anything. The reader will, however, understand that, keenly as Forster felt the manner in which he quitted his post, and strongly as he disapproved of the action of his colleagues in the new departure upon which they had now entered, he had no reason to regret the removal from his shoulders of a burden which had long been distasteful and oppressive to him, and which latterly had become well-nigh unbearable.

The diary of his daughter for the day (May 2nd) shows something of the spirit in which he accepted his fate. “A little before eight, father himself appeared, and gave us a most cheery account of all that had taken place. He had fully expected that nothing would be said that afternoon, and was surprised when Mr. B—— said to him: ‘So I hear Gladstone is going to make his statement this afternoon.’ ‘Is he?’ said father, with astonishment. ‘Well, you ought to know,’ was the not unnatural answer. Not wishing to be in the House when Mr. Gladstone spoke, and yet wishing to hear what was said, father took refuge in Lady Brand’s gallery. Having heard the statement, he betook himself to the Athenæum, where he was greeted with acclamation at the whist-table in the light of an old player restored to his friends. Much cheerful talk at dinner, but a curious feeling of excitement, and as though the tears were not very far off one’s eyes. ‘Well,’ said father, ‘I think you might all drink the health of the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford, as Gladstone called me to-night. I am very glad of one thing, and that is that I was able to get that done (extra pay) for the constabulary before I went out of office!’”

To MR. BURKE.

“*[Confidential.]*”

“Irish Office, May 3rd, 1882.

“MY DEAR BURKE,

“You will understand why I could not tell you what would happen. No one can exactly tell what another man would do in his place; but I strongly suspect that had you been in my place you would have acted as I have done.

“Well, I must say this, that my difficulties have been greatly lessened by your help. I do not think I ever acted

with any man on whom I felt I could rely with such perfect confidence.

“I suppose I am still Chief Secretary, until replaced; but of course I cannot take any step requiring discretion.

“Yours very truly,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

On Thursday, May 4th, Mr. Forster, having received the usual gracious permission from the Queen, made his statement of the reasons of his resignation. Just before he did so, it was made known that his successor was to be Lord Frederick Cavendish, and not, as most persons had expected, Mr. Chamberlain. Never, probably, in the history of the English Parliament had a more dramatic scene been witnessed than that upon which the spectators in the gallery looked down as Mr. Forster rose, no longer from his accustomed place upon the Treasury bench, but from a corner seat behind it, to give his explanation of the circumstances under which he had retired from the Ministry. For months past the eyes of his fellow-countrymen had been fixed upon him. Some had approved, and some had blamed, but all had been conscious of the absorbing interest of the struggle which he had been waging, almost single-handed, against the revolutionary forces in Ireland. The popular interest had been stimulated by the fact that all men knew that, whilst dangerous conspiracies against the life of the Chief Secretary had been woven in Dublin, intrigues hardly less deadly against his official career and his character as a statesman had been carried on in London. He had escaped with his life from the desperate men who had sought to slay him in Ireland; but he had fallen in England before those who sought not his life, but his career and his reputation. His retirement from office was universally accepted as implying the reversal of the policy which he represented, and the opening up of a new era in the history of the two countries. The mind of the nation was strongly divided as to the wisdom and safety of the new policy, and according as men thought of that policy so did they regard Mr. Forster. To those who were the advocates of the new departure, his fall from office was an occasion of triumph. To the rest of the world he stood forth as a hero and a victim, sacrificed upon the altar of political expediency. Thus the crowded House, where every seat on the floor and in the galleries had its occupant, met under the influence of the strongest emotions to hear his statement. The Prince of Wales and many of the leaders among the peers sat with the ambassadors in the diplomatic gallery, deeply in-

terested spectators of the scene. But it was not upon the hair-apparent or the distinguished men around him that the attention of the House was first fixed. Among the Irish members below the gangway two men were to be seen who had long been absent from their Parliamentary duties. They were two of the newly released suspects—Mr. Dillon and Mr. O’Kelly; and their presence in the midst of their friends seemed to proclaim their triumph over the minister to whose last official statement the House was about to listen. From the Irish benches, the eye of the spectator turned naturally to the Treasury bench, where, in the pale set faces of the ministers, who had just arrived after long debate at a resolution which implied the loss of a colleague and the reversal of a policy, one could easily read signs of that repressed excitement which had possession of all. There were two vacant places on the bench that evening. One was the place so lately occupied by Mr. Forster himself. The other was that which belonged to Lord Frederick Cavendish, whose refined and gentle face could be seen beneath the gallery, where—for the moment shut out from the House of Commons by his acceptance of office—he sat to listen to the speech of his predecessor. No mark of doom was on his brow; but there were many afterwards who recalled the air of almost pathetic interest—the grave and slightly abstracted expression in his eyes—which distinguished him whilst the debate proceeded. As one who was near him said later on, it seemed as though he were in a waking dream.

It was upon Forster, however, that men’s eyes finally rested when the preliminaries of the sitting had been gone through, and the moment for his rising drew near. No one could see him without feeling conscious that he bore outward traces of the conflict, dark and terrible, from which he had but now emerged. His fellow-members had literally seen his hair grow grey during those two years of service in Ireland, and in the strongly marked lines of his powerful face, in his very attitude as he sat upon the bench, no longer half-lounging, as was his wont in ordinary times, but with bent form and downcast eye, marks of the conflict and crisis through which he had passed could be discerned only too plainly. When he rose in response to the Speaker’s call, a great cheer rolled through the House. It was not merely the generous cheer with which most men are willing to greet one who, having done his duty to the best of his ability, has met with disaster in his course. That sentiment, indeed, pervaded most parts of the House when Forster rose. But mingled with it, in many quarters, was distinct and pronounced sympathy with the policy which he represented,

and dislike—one might almost say disgust—towards the policy by which he had been supplanted. It was, perhaps, but natural that the Irish members, who regarded the occasion as one of personal triumph for themselves, should have replied to this cheer of greeting with which Forster was received, by one of defiant exultation. A moment later the Irish cheer swelled into a fierce shout of joy, as the man who, more than any other, personated the national foe with whom Forster had been engaged in deadly struggle, the leader of the Land League, the “uncrowned king,” whose will had been stronger than the law of the land in three of the provinces of Ireland, took his seat in his old place below the gangway, and turned to face the man by whose will he had for months past been a prisoner in Kilmainham.

The atmosphere was charged with the intense excitement universally felt, and which centred as it were upon Mr. Forster. Yet so well had he nerved himself for the occasion, that when he began to speak he alone in the crowded House seemed to be fully master of his emotions. His voice was low, but deep and clear; his language simple and precise.

The explanation which he had to give of the circumstances under which he had resigned was perfectly clear and straightforward. It is unnecessary to repeat it here, for the facts have already been made plain in the course of the narrative. Forster was happily able to point to the fact that the state of Ireland had improved and was improving, but it was not yet possible, without risk of the gravest danger, to relax the hold of the Executive; nor was there such an improvement as to make it, in his opinion, safe to release the suspects unconditionally. Much party feeling was aroused in the House by the speeches which followed the explanatory statement. Suspicions had got abroad as to the existence of some kind of arrangement between Mr. Parnell and the Government—a bargain under which the Irish leader had purchased his release. Nothing on this subject was said either by Forster or Mr. Gladstone on May 4th, though the expression of a hope by the former that ministers would not submit to any black-mail arrangement was eagerly caught up by those who shared the apprehensions so largely entertained by the general public. The announcement that ministers meant to bring in a bill on the question of arrears was regarded by the House as proof that the “new departure” which had led to the resignation of the Chief Secretary was to be one in the direction of an amicable understanding with Mr. Parnell and his colleagues.

Subsequently the correspondence between Captain O’Shea

and Mr. Parnell became public property. Forster was blamed at the time, by some of those critics whose loyalty to the Government which they supported apparently interfered with their sense of justice towards others, for having refused to allow a garbled version of Mr. Parnell's letter—omitting all reference to his suggestion that he would be able to support the Liberal party upon certain conditions—to be read in the House of Commons. There is no need now to defend him against that charge, the absurdity of which was obvious at the time when it was first brought forward. He was bound, in defence of his own honour and in justification of the course which he had been compelled to take in resigning his office, not to allow a mutilated document to be placed before the House of Commons in professed explanation of his conduct. The heated controversy which was waged over the so-called Kilmainham Treaty, and the bitter partisan condemnations which were pronounced upon Forster himself, because he had dared to pursue his own course on a question on which he had learned much by a practical experience of the most terrible kind, and on which he felt so deeply that no personal consideration could affect his judgment, need not engage attention here. They belong to a dead past, and no vindication of Forster's action in connection with them is necessary.

But before the full details of the circumstances under which he had left office became known, indeed before the excitement which that event had caused in the public mind had subsided, there occurred the terrible tragedy of the Phoenix Park. The story of the crime lies outside the scope of this narrative, but it had so close a connection with Mr. Forster's career in Ireland, it was so intimately associated with his own personality, that it cannot be passed over in silence.

Forster's resignation, at the moment when Lord Spencer was about to go to Dublin as the successor of Lord Cowper, made it necessary that not a day should be lost in the nomination of his successor, and, as I have already said, the appointment of Lord Frederick Cavendish was officially notified on May 4th. On the following evening Lord Frederick started, in company with Lord Spencer, for Dublin. The "new departure" had excited the wildest hopes among the Nationalists; the release of Mr. Parnell being regarded by them as a crowning triumph for their cause. They were prepared accordingly to receive the new representatives of the English Government, if not with enthusiasm, at all events with a not unfriendly welcome; and the streets of Dublin were thronged with a great crowd of Irishmen on the morning of the 6th of May,

when the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary made their entry into the city. A few hours later the whole empire was convulsed with horror by the news that Lord Frederick Cavendish, and Mr. Burke, the Irish Under-Secretary, had been foully murdered, whilst crossing the Phoenix Park, by a band of assassins, whose plans, it was evident, had been laid long beforehand with the utmost deliberation.

It was late at night when the news of the terrible crime was received in London. The murder itself had been committed about seven o'clock in the evening, and had actually been witnessed by passers-by, who believed that the assassins and their victims were merely indulging in rude horse-play. The first news of the tragedy did not, however, reach London until some hours later, when a telegram from Lord Spencer was placed in the hands of the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, at a dinner-party given by a member of the Government. The tidings fell like the proverbial "bolt from the blue" upon those who were rejoicing in the belief that all the difficulties in the way of a reconciliation between the two nations had been removed by the resignation of Mr. Forster and the release of the suspects. It was at a reception at the Admiralty that the news of the tragedy first leaked out; and it was there that Forster heard of an event which affected him more closely than any other person not a member of the families of the murdered men. His daughter writes in her diary: "I went this evening, after our own dinner-party, with father to the Admiralty—an evening party to meet the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. After leaving my cloak, father and I were preparing to enter the drawing-room, filled with people, and a buzz of talking and lights, but were met by Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Howard Vincent. Sir William took father aside to speak to him, as I supposed, about some question of Parliamentary tactics, and I was left to talk to Mr. Vincent. By the look of father's face as he came towards me, I could see that something was the matter; but he frightened me when he said to me, 'Put your things on; we must go.' As soon as we were outside I entreated him to tell me what had happened, seeing that he had called a hansom, and was, I thought, going to drive off and leave me in this fearful suspense. But he said nothing, only signed to me to get into the hansom, and left word with the servants that the carriage was to go home. Then he said to me, 'They've shot Burke and dangerously wounded Lord Frederick. They've killed Burke,' he added. After some minutes, he said, 'It is awful.' 'I don't understand it,' I said. 'They find the pressure taken

off,' he answered; adding, after another silence, 'I shall go to-morrow, and ask if they'll let me go back.'"

Those who remember how that dreadful night and the following day, with its long hours of anxiety, horror, and excitement, passed, will not wonder at the emotion which was shown by Forster when he heard that his own successor in the post he had held but a few days before, and the brave and devoted Irishman who had been his faithful friend and fellow-labourer during his two years of work in Dublin, had fallen side by side under the knives of wretches whose guilt was only made more hideous by the flagrant hypocrisy of the pretence that it was from lofty motives of patriotism that they had been led to bathe their hands in innocent blood. Forster "could not trust his voice," as he tried to express himself regarding the blow which had been struck on that bright spring evening in the Phoenix Park. Like all who knew Lord Frederick Cavendish, he was inexpressibly shocked at the thought that a life so full of promise, a life already indeed so rich in performance, should have been cut short in such a manner; and there were, of course, special personal causes which made the sentiment doubly keen in his case. But it was for Mr. Burke that he felt most. He knew even then that his own was the life which had really been aimed at, and there was in his mind that undercurrent of noble distress which affects the soldier who learns that his comrade has fallen at the post of duty and of danger, whilst he himself has been absent.

No one who saw Forster on the Sunday morning which followed the receipt of the news will forget their meeting with him. He went to the Reform Club early in the morning. One of his objects in going there was to see the present writer with regard to a proposed dinner in his honour, for which arrangements had already been made, and which he now asked might be abandoned. The great crowd of members which thronged the hall—generally empty at that hour on Sunday morning—pressed round Forster, gazing at him with wondering eyes, as though they saw in him one who had been saved by a miracle from the fate which had fallen upon others. He himself was still under the influence of the deep distress which had overwhelmed him when he first heard the news. But he discussed the event calmly. In his own mind there was even then not the smallest doubt that the crime had been deliberately planned, and that it was nothing more than the natural development of that hellish system of personal violence and outrage against which he had been waging for months past so

strenuous a warfare. It must have been a revelation to some of those who knew nothing of the real character of the man, and who had accepted that ridiculous perversion of the truth—widely current in certain circles—which represented Forster as one whose feelings were blunt and hard, to note the tenderness of the faltering accents in which he spoke of the two dead men, and, above all, of Mr. Burke. No one could be with him without feeling that this tragical *dénouement* to the exciting events of the previous week, and to that “new departure” over which the journalists were raising their pæans of joy, affected him to an extraordinary degree. But, in whatever other way he was affected by the event, it did not touch the iron nerve which had been proof against the perils and trials of the past two years; and, believing far more fully than most people did then that the crime of the Phoenix Park was no “accident,” but a part of a cunningly devised scheme of political assassination, which included his own murder—or “removal,” as it was euphemistically termed by the assassins—in its scope, he went straight from the Reform Club to Mr. Gladstone, and offered to return to Dublin that evening, temporarily to fill the vacancy which had been caused by the loss of Mr. Burke, the man who, next to himself, was most intimately acquainted with the existing condition of things in Ireland.

Remembering all the circumstances, the offer was one which Forster's friends may well recall with pride. Devotion to duty, of the strongest kind, could alone have led him to make it at such a moment. The Ministry did not avail themselves of his proffered service. Forster's official connection with Ireland had closed for ever.

It is not wonderful that, in the lurid light of the great crime of May 6th, men should have viewed the policy and actions of Mr. Forster very differently from the way in which they regarded them before that event. Numberless Englishmen who had been inclined to scoff at his warnings when he was in office, and when he was explaining his differences with his colleagues, now regarded him as being the one man who had really known the truth regarding Ireland and told it plainly. There were many others who, without going so far, were now for the first time enabled to realize the gravity of the task in which he had been engaged, and to understand that, in the existing conditions, success in such a task, with the means to which he was confined, was impossible. As for the “new departure,” it came to an end when the cowards' blows were struck in the Phoenix Park on the 6th of May.

On the following Monday the House met only to adjourn

immediately, after fitting tribute had been paid to the virtues of the murdered men. How different now was the scene from that which had been witnessed on the previous Thursday! Those who had then been loudest in their exultation over Forster's fall, now sat mute and sorrowful, overwhelmed by the blow which had shattered their hopes. Mr. Forster seized the opportunity of paying his own tribute of sorrow to the victims, but it was specially of Mr. Burke that he wished to speak. "There is no member, I believe," he said, "certainly no member present, who knew Mr. Burke so well as I did, and I feel it to be my duty to say a word or two about him. I had the most intimate relations with him under difficult circumstances for two years. It was a very short time before I found out what manner of man he was, and I can truly say I believe the Queen and country never had a more faithful, a more upright, and a more truly honourable and unselfish servant. His industry, his devotion to his duty, was something more than we are accustomed to. During the last two years he never had a fortnight's holiday. Day after day, from morning to night, he plodded on with work which was most distasteful, uncomplainingly, quietly, with a silent, dignified reticence that belonged to him, without much acknowledgment, without much praise. He never expected it. I think I never met with a man so completely without prejudice, so completely and absolutely fair, and so determined to do justice to all classes, and that in a country where it is sometimes difficult." He concluded by speaking of Mr. Burke's special anxiety to protect the tenantry wherever they were the victims of injustice.

On the next day, Tuesday, Sir William Harcourt introduced a new Coercion Bill, which, although it was laid upon the lines indicated by Forster before he retired from office, was in many respects more severe and stringent in its character than anything which he had proposed. The assassinations had at least convinced his old colleagues that he was right in his declaration that Ireland could not at that moment be governed, nor a policy of conciliation adopted towards the popular party, unless stronger powers were placed in the hands of the authorities than those granted them by the common law.

The terrible and momentous events which followed so closely upon his resignation of office prevented any conclusive test being applied to the new policy which ministers had adopted as compared with that which he advocated. Everything was changed by the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. The policy of the Cabinet itself was so

largely modified that it was virtually another policy altogether from that which had been the occasion of his resignation. Ministers, indeed, were compelled to adopt one of the conditions which he had set forth as essential to his own continuance in office. Thus there was never any possibility of comparing the new policy with the old. This fact may not justify Forster's friends in claiming a triumph for his Irish Secretaryship. No such triumph was possible under the existing conditions; but it is at least a sufficient reason for dismissing with contempt the declarations of those partisan judges who loudly denounced his administration in Ireland as a failure, and who professed to discover the reason for that failure in the idiosyncrasy of the man himself.

It is only necessary, in order to complete the account of his Chief Secretaryship, to record briefly the facts which were brought to light in February, 1883, when James Carey, one of the leaders in the plot for the assassination of Mr. Burke, turned Queen's evidence, and revealed the whole ghastly truth with regard to the Phoenix Park murders. This Carey, it should be said, was one of the suspects imprisoned by Mr. Forster. He had passed as a respectable member of society, and, at the time of his arrest on the charge of being concerned in the murders of May 6th, he was a member of the Dublin Town Council. His story, as told in the witness-box, after he had turned informer to save his own neck, was that, in November, 1881, a secret society had been established in Dublin called the Irish Invincibles. The object of this society was "to make history" by "removing" all tyrants. The first person against whose life the conspiracy was directed was Mr. Forster. Next to him in the fatal list came Lord Cowper; whilst the name of Mr. Burke only seems to have been added as an afterthought. It was really Mr. Forster who was the object of the vengeance of these men; and marvellous indeed was the story told of his repeated escapes from their attempts upon his life. On Friday, March 3rd, the conspirators, who were kept informed by confederates in London, met at the railway station for the purpose of killing him on his return from his memorable journey to Clare. They were armed with revolvers, and meant, so Carey said, to shoot everybody in the carriage with Mr. Forster. Happily he was then in the midst of his visits to the disturbed districts, and the assassins were altogether misinformed as to his intention to return to Dublin. A few days later another plot was devised. He was to be shot whilst driving from the Chief Secretary's Lodge to Dublin. The precise spot fixed upon for the commission of the outrage

was between Victoria Bridge and King's Bridge; and here Brady, Kelly, and the other men who subsequently murdered Lord Frederick Cavendish, were lying in wait for him. A line of conspirators had been formed along the route for the purpose of signalling his approach. In due time he came along the road in his carriage. Carey, the leader of the party, was on the spot, and as soon as the carriage had passed he jumped on a tram-car, hoping to reach the scene fixed upon for the murder in time to witness it. But again the scheme failed. One of the conspirators—a man named Rowles—tardily repented of his part in the crime. He was one of the scouts whose duty it was to signal Forster's approach. He saw the Chief Secretary's carriage pass, and he made no sign. Thus and thus only, by the providence of God, was Forster's life saved on this occasion. Rowles, who is now dead, acknowledged before his death that his heart had failed him at the last moment, and that he had intentionally allowed the destined victim to escape.

Their repeated failures exasperated the conspirators, and they redoubled their efforts to attain their end. For four successive nights—Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—in the week in which Mr. Forster finally left Ireland, the whole gang, fifteen in number, waited in Westland Row Station purposing to kill him as he was entering the train for Kingstown. On the last day of their waiting Carey told how they recognized Mrs. Forster and her daughter in one of the carriages; but Forster himself was not there, and again he had escaped them. This was the occasion, already mentioned, on which he had accepted the suggestion of Mr. Jephson, and had dined at Kingstown instead of in Dublin. "If he had been there," said Carey, in giving his evidence, "he would not have been alive to-day." It was only when it was known that Mr. Forster was not to return to Ireland that the conspirators turned their attention to Mr. Burke. The evidence of the informers clearly showed that the intention was simply to kill the Under-Secretary. Lord Frederick Cavendish was unknown to the men who slew him. He owed his fate to the fact of his having walked across the park with Mr. Burke, and to his courage in defending that gentleman when he was attacked.

When Carey's hideous story was told, popular feeling rose nearly as high as at the time of the assassinations. The fact that some men who had been closely connected with the Land League were proved to have been at the bottom of the vile plot, and that money was freely expended in carrying it out,

intensified the horror and indignation of the public. As for Mr. Forster, people now saw how puerile had been the spiteful suggestion of some of his political assailants that the plots against him, of which only rumours had hitherto been heard, were merely imaginary affairs, dexterously invented for the purpose of enlisting public sympathy on his behalf! It is not pleasant even to have to refer to such a fabrication as this. But it was current at one time among those who considered that Forster had sinned unpardonably when he refused to yield his own judgment to that of his colleagues, and it is, therefore, necessary to speak of it. The infamous creature who had taken a leading part in planning the murder of Forster, who subsequently directed the ruffians who slew Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and who, after betraying all who had confided in him, himself died by the hand of an assassin, was able at least to refute this particular aspersion upon the character of the man against whose life he had plotted so desperately and persistently.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LAST YEARS.

TOWARDS the close of May, Mr. Forster went to Normandy for a brief rest after the excitements and fatigues of his Irish secretaryship. He was the more willing to take this step inasmuch as his presence in the House of Commons, after the Phoenix Park murders, appeared to have a strangely exasperating effect upon the followers of Mr. Parnell, who lost no opportunity of insulting him. Forster's opinions regarding the Parnellite party had undergone no change, whilst the terrible events which followed his resignation had only strengthened his conviction that the resolution adopted by ministers on May 2nd was wholly wrong. But he had no wish whatever to increase the embarrassments of his old colleagues; and though determined to stick to his post and live down the memory of the past and the passions of the moment, he was not sorry to avail himself of a journey abroad, as a reason for a brief absence from the centre of political life. There was another motive which made him anxious to go. This was the personal question which had been raised in connection with his own resignation by the revelation of the truth regarding Mr. Parnell's release from Kilmainham. Ministers had suffered seriously from the revelation of that truth, and, as usual, partisans were found who sought to lay upon Mr. Forster the whole responsibility for the odium which the Government had incurred by taking measures against which he had protested. Though resolute in asserting his undoubted right to defend himself, and to make the whole truth known so far as it was essential to the formation of a sound judgment upon the affair, Forster was greatly grieved by the course which events took and by the antagonism which seemed to be created between himself and his old colleagues. To his friend, Mr. Thomas Cooper, he wrote, saying, "Your letters have been a great and real comfort to me. This

wretched personal affair into which I have been dragged has been more worry to me than any public event in the course of my life, but I do not see how I could in substance have acted otherwise." He was only absent a few days from England, but, brief as his rest was, it did him good. Writing from Bayeux, March 30th, Mrs. Forster says, "I think our little excursion is answering. William is looking well, and studies his 'Murray' and his map with as much interest as if he had never governed Ireland."

The summer passed uneventfully for him. He was now enjoying to the full his release from the cares and labours of office, and was hardly to be drawn into controversial politics even by the exciting events which were happening in Egypt, and which had led to the retirement of Mr. Bright from the Government. He returned to his old haunts and his old habits, was happy in indulging his love of reading and his passion for old books, and found in the whist-tables at the Reform and the Athenæum the relaxation which had for years been practically denied to him. And here I may introduce a reference to him as a whist-player, for which I am indebted to Mr. James Payn.

"It is curious, and proves the need that almost every nature—and those the most perfect certainly not the least—feels for some sort of relaxation, that a man so earnest and little inclined for frivolity as W. E. Forster was a most enthusiastic whist-player. He never, indeed, wasted his time at it, or gave up a single hour to it, so far as I know, that was owed to more serious matters; but when he was playing I think he enjoyed the game more than any other man I ever knew. If there were only two other men, he would play dummy; if only one, double dummy. And yet he was very much the reverse of a good player. Perhaps he began it too late in life, which is fatal to excellence, even with the most intelligent; but the fact is, he hardly ever got through a rubber quite to his own satisfaction, and still less to that of his partner. On the other hand, in sweetness of temper and immobility to the worst that Fortune could do for him in the way of ill-luck, he had, in my experience, no equal. He liked the excitement of the game, and was willing, and even eager, to have a bet on it in addition to the ordinary stakes, but of the greed of the gambler he had absolutely nothing. He did not seem to care one halfpenny except for the mere passing triumph of winning, and, considering his play, he was on the whole lucky, whether he won or lost. The vulgar phrase about paying and looking pleasant—a difficult feat, as it

would seem, for the great majority of whist-players—might have been invented to suit him, so exactly did it describe his behaviour in adversity. Whist was to him a far greater amusement than to most men, but it went no further; it was never that serious business of life that it is so often made. He was always full of fun over it, did not the least mind having his own play animadverted upon (though he was not spared by any means, for the Board of Green Cloth is no respecter of persons), and was never irritated by any mistake of his partner. One afternoon he had won a good many rubbers of me, and it is quite possible that I may have looked resentful at him for the partiality with which Fortune was treating him. 'If it would be any satisfaction to you, my dear fellow,' he said, with his humorous smile, 'and a relief to your feelings to call me Buckshot, do it.'"

In September and October he paid a long-anticipated visit to Russia. He had always delighted in foreign travel, and it was a real joy to him once more to be permitted to indulge his passion for it. The reader has seen in a previous chapter how he used the opportunities afforded by visits to new scenes and intercourse with strangers to inform his mind, and the present seems a fitting opportunity to give some account of the manner in which he enjoyed those journeys which were taken rather for purposes of recreation than with any serious object. It is from the pen of his wife.

"The journey of 1854 was the first of those brief and almost annual tours which for so many years formed the chief recreation and enjoyment of his life, and which, therefore, require some slight mention. They rather changed their character as time went on and our children began to accompany us; but for many years we usually started for Switzerland or the Italian valleys of the Alps as soon as the session ended, to spend a few weeks among the mountains—he walking and I riding—and as much away from the beaten tracks as possible. We both shared an ardent love of mountain scenery, and they were weeks of great delight to him, in which he threw aside every care of politics or business, and gave himself up to 'play.' Not that public interests could always be put aside; for I remember that, in 1857, the news of the disasters in the Indian mutiny, as we read them in the Italian papers, made him so miserable, that we cut short our tour and returned home.

"He was a delightful traveller—for nothing ever came amiss to him, unless it were a spell of bad weather which interfered with a glacier expedition; and to the little *désagré-*

ments which often make such a serious drawback to the pleasures of a tour, he was singularly indifferent, while interests of varied kinds were never wanting. Wherever we were travelling, the social and material condition of the country people, their way of living, their elections, their military service, were an unfailing subject of interest to him, about which, in spite of his limited command of languages, he contrived to extract a surprising amount of information in friendly and sociable talk with people as he went along. He was keenly alive also to historical associations, but especially to all that were connected with the Middle Ages, and an old castle with a history had attractions for him which he could seldom resist, however inconvenient the delay might be.

“Still, the mountains, as I have said, were his chief object. He had always been a vigorous walker, and was elected a member of the Alpine Club in 1859, but in our earlier journeys he was content with the walking in which my pony could accompany him—excursions, of a few days at a time, among the remoter valleys and low passes, when we would start in the early morning and go on for ten or twelve hours with but short halts, taking an easy day at some mountain inn before we started again; and many were the brief but pleasant holidays we spent in this way—in the Pyrenees, the Tyrol, the Italian valleys of the Alps, the Dolomites, and our well-loved Switzerland. But gradually the love of snow and glacier climbing grew upon him; and although, of course, beginning Alpine climbing as he did after middle life (and also out of consideration for my fears), he never attempted the greater Alpine feats, yet his spirit and endurance carried him through undertakings to which his training and his somewhat heavy frame seemed little suited, and he enjoyed a high ascent or an arduous expedition among the snowfields with all the zest and keenness of a boy. ‘Thou must remember,’ he wrote, in answer to some remonstrance about risk, ‘that there is an awful grandeur among these snowy heights to be met with nowhere below; and, besides, even if such ascents be no better than sport, climbing mountains is at any rate no more foolish than hunting foxes.’ His enjoyment of it lasted to the end, and, indeed, outlasted his strength. In 1884, we went for a fortnight to Grindelwald, and after an interval of several years he was delighted to get upon a glacier again, and was out for many hours. But the stress and toil of the last few years had told upon him, and the exertion brought on an attack of shivering and illness which showed that it must not be repeated; so that was his last day upon a glacier.

“ In passing from the subject of his holiday mountaineering, I will quote the brief recollections of him as an Alpine climber which were contributed to the *Alpine Journal* after his death, by his dear and old friend, Mr. John Ball, F.R.S. The recollections refer to a walking-tour they made together in Carinthia in 1865, which always stood high among my husband's pleasantest memories.

“ Nature had scarcely designed W. E. Forster for an Alpine climber. He had great bodily strength and endurance, but was not very active, and he had had no early training to develop the flexibility of the muscles. But he had intense enjoyment in the grandeur and beauty of mountain scenery, and for the rest the same indomitable pluck that he displayed in other fields of action carried him through all difficulties. He had been used to ramble over the hills and fells of the north of England, but had never, to the best of my belief, ascended a high mountain until he first went to Switzerland (I think in 1859), when he was already past forty. His first ascent was that of Mont Blanc. In the same year he was elected a member of our club. In the course of an excursion in the Eastern Alps in 1865, I made two ascents with him, in each of which the qualities of his nature were well shown.

“ The Terglou, in Carniola, is one of those rock pinnacles which look much more formidable than they really are. The main peak (extremely steep on all sides) is connected with a minor peak easy of access, by a rock *arête* so narrow that the usual course is to pass it astride, one leg hanging on each side. Facing you, the main peak looks as steep as the corner of an old French roof. Forster was suffering from a severe headache, the result of bad food and a bad night at the Belpole Alp, and when we had reached the summit of the Little Terglou and saw what was before us, I suggested to him to rest under a rock and await my return. If the ascent had appeared easy he would doubtless have taken my advice, but the idea of flinching from a difficulty was intolerable to him. He insisted on going forward, and made the ascent, finding (as usual with him) some difficulty in accomplishing the descent.

“ Our second joint ascent was that of the Cima Tosa, the highest of the Dolomites between Val Rendena and Molveno, then believed to be an untouched peak. We started from Molveno with a man (Nicolosi) who was supposed to know the mountain. He led us by a long *détour* to a point from which the ascent was plainly impossible. I then took the lead, and after another *détour* we reached the little glacier

from which I believe all subsequent ascents from this side have been made. Above some steep but apparently practicable rocks the highest peak seemed to promise no difficulty, but probably some delay in step-cutting, as the snow was hard. By this time the day was far spent. I knew that my friend could not go fast, and that the descent through the Val delle Seghe would lie in great part over loose blocks, very awkward at night. I accordingly put the case to him, telling him that it was quite possible that if we persisted we should not reach Molveno that night. His answer was decided. We should complete the ascent if it were practicable and take our chance for the rest. We did so, reached the summit, consumed much time in the descent, and were benighted amid a mass of angular blocks in unstable equilibrium! The day had been cloudy, but after waiting half an hour the moon came out, and we finally reached Molveno about 11 p.m.

“I have been fortunate many times in travelling companions, but have known none to compare with Forster. Along with the deep interest of his conversation there were none of the drawbacks which naturally attend on the society of men of strong character. Entirely unselfish, he was tolerant and patient in a unique degree. Occasional annoyances and inconveniences merely furnished matter for grim but kindly humour that made them positively pleasant to his companion. A nature so pure and lofty never appeared so completely at home as amid the grand solitudes of the mountains.”—*Alpine Journal*.

“I pass on to the journeys of later years, when our children were our companions, and the walking and riding of younger days were exchanged for the large carriage and voiturier. He still lost no opportunity of a long walk or mountain climb, and never returned from either without bringing back some rare or favourite flower which he knew would be prized.

“In these later tours I recall especially our early start in the lovely summer or autumn mornings, from some sleeping-place among the mountains; the fresh sunlight falling on the dewy grass, the morning mists softly uprolling from the mountain sides,—and the delightful sense that we were setting forth on a long day’s journey into a world of beauty. It took some time to get us all settled with our maps and guide-books at hand; then, as soon as we were settled, he or I would often read a Psalm of praise. I can hear now the tone of his voice, so deep and reverent; but indeed his reading of the Bible, and especially of the Psalms, was always beautiful, and those who

had chanced on any occasion to hear him would often tell me how much it had struck them.

“But I must bring to an end these slight and wandering notes of the holidays of many years, leaving untouched his journey to the Carpathian Mountains and Hungary, and visit to the Balkan provinces and Constantinople in 1876, during the height of the Eastern question; our journey to Russia and the Northern capitals in 1882; and his cruise in the Mediterranean and visit to Bulgaria in 1883. The daughter who was his sole and happy companion in the journey to Constantinople, and who was with us in all our tours afterwards, has given a few of her own recollections of them,* without which mine would be most one-sided and incomplete.”

He returned from Russia towards the close of October, restored to something like his old physical and mental vigour and freshness. Parliament had been summoned for an autumn session when he got back to London, the special work to be done being the passing of a series of rules affecting the procedure of the House. He appeared in his place in the House, but did not take any conspicuous part in the debate, save when the question which had so long been uppermost in his mind—that of slavery—was touched upon in connection with Egyptian affairs.

To his Wife.

“November 12th, 1882.

MY DEAREST WIFE,

“My journey into the City is like returning to the occupation and interests of my youth. I am going to the old Anti-Slavery Office in New Broad Street to get up information for my short speech on Wednesday. The demand for boys for eunuchs and domestic slaves is really as destructive as for girls. The weight of the meeting falls on me, as I have to move the important resolution. I have seen Dillon, who evidently wishes us to press the Government to urge on the Khedive the abolition of *slavery*, as the real means of stopping the slave trade.

“I hope to-morrow I shall hear that matters are settled at Glasgow—I do not wish to be cheated out of my opportunity there.

“I have material for two political speeches: the Liberalism of the future for the club, which is mainly composed of young men,—an attempt to gauge the new forces of political life,—

* Vide Chapter XVI.

and Home Rule for the public meeting. Just now I am more able to say exactly what I think than at any previous time. I have also promised to open a higher board school . . .”

The visit to Glasgow, to which allusion was made in the foregoing letter, was for him one of the brightest spots in the political history of the year. He had been elected President of the Gladstone Club in that city, and had accepted an invitation to preside at the annual dinner. His visit in the middle of December was made the occasion of a great demonstration, not merely of the political principles of the Liberals of Glasgow, but of their personal admiration for Forster himself. The dinner of the Gladstone Club, usually a simple social gathering, became in his honour a banquet of an imposing character, at which not merely great numbers of the younger Liberals of the west of Scotland, but many leading men were present. Forster spoke at length after dinner, on the question of Ireland, urging that the Land Act should be left to bring forth its legitimate fruits, and that Parliament should give clear expression to its opinion upon the question of Home Rule. On the following day, December 15th, he addressed a great meeting of Liberals in St. Andrew's Hall. His reception was an enthusiastic one, and the resolution of welcome, which was carried without a dissentient voice, concluded with an expression of the hope that he would soon again be enabled to take part in the work of the Government. His speech on this occasion dealt with the political questions of the time—Egypt, the right of the agricultural labourer to the suffrage, the Transvaal and the duties of England towards the native races in South Africa and other portions of the Empire. On December 16th he opened a board school at Govan, making a speech upon education; and finally, on December 18th, the incidents of a visit which was very much in the nature of a personal triumph, reached their culminating point in the presentation to him of the freedom of the city. The whole visit was most pleasing and satisfactory to Mr. Forster; and none who knew him could doubt that the warmth of the sympathy shown towards him by the Scotch Liberals was intensely grateful. “The fact that he was obliged to separate from his colleagues,” said the *Glasgow Herald* in reference to his visit, “has not in the least degree diminished the respect which a constituency devoted to Mr. Gladstone entertains towards him.” All the more gratifying was the evidence which Glasgow afforded of this fact, inasmuch as in some other places he was looked upon with coldness and suspicion, not because he had

failed to do his best when in Ireland, but because he had ventured to hold his own views in opposition to those of the other members of the Government of Mr. Gladstone.

The position which he now held in the political world was a peculiar one. In some respects it might be described as a position of isolation. In retiring from office he had secured his own independence. But at that epoch in the history of English Liberalism it was more than the mere loss of office which a man had to fear when he ventured to assert his independence of opinion in face of a powerful and united party. Forster was destined for the remainder of his public career to find himself always "under suspicion," so far as certain politicians were concerned. Any word that he uttered, any step that he took in connection with public affairs, however innocent, was liable to be misinterpreted by those who seemed to think it impossible that any motives higher than merely personal ones could influence a statesman. Not even the sneers of the press, or the censures of the caucus could induce Forster, however, to resign that freedom of judgment and of action which was the compensation he had received for his loss of office. Moreover, though he was in these years in a chronic state of war with one wing of the Liberal party, his position in the House of Commons and among his fellow-countrymen was higher than it had ever been before. In Parliament, his speeches were marked by an oratorical power such as even his own friends had hardly suspected him of commanding, whilst throughout the country his opinions upon the great questions of the time exercised an influence upon the public judgment more potent than that of any other public man save Mr. Gladstone. Freedom from official restraints enabled his strong individuality to assert itself fully, and though he was at the head of no organization, controlled no caucus, and did not even command the support of a single metropolitan newspaper, his personality became one of the most conspicuous and powerful factors in the politics of the day.

The public history of the years which followed his retirement from office must be told briefly. And yet it may be doubted whether, during any corresponding period in his life, Forster ever played so important a part in directing the thoughts of his fellow-countrymen. Early in January, 1883, he presided at the annual dinner of the Leeds Liberal Club. He had many devoted friends in Leeds, and his appearance among them, whether at meetings of the club or at other political gatherings, was always hailed with enthusiasm. His

speech at this particular dinner was memorable because of its relation to Irish affairs. He discussed, as the chief topic of domestic politics, the question of the extension of household suffrage to the counties—a measure of which he had long been a most ardent supporter. But on this occasion he not merely advocated the early passing of such a bill, but insisted that, if passed, it must apply to Ireland as well as England. The only way of meeting the demand for Home Rule and the dissolution of the Union, he declared, was by saying, “We will treat them as we treat ourselves.” Acting on this principle, he recommended that if a measure for the reform of the local government of England was introduced its provisions should be extended to Ireland. These declarations produced a great impression at the time; for up to the moment when they were made, no man of Forster’s rank in political life had advocated the lowering of franchise in Ireland in connection with the passing of the Household Suffrage Bill in England. The fact that he was the first to make such a proposal proved that nothing which had happened in connection with Irish affairs had lessened his desire to deal justly to Irishmen or had affected his judgment upon Irish questions.

But at the time when he was thus in advance of many members of the Government in advocating a reduction of the franchise in Ireland, his opinion upon one grave question remained as strong as ever. This was his conviction that a terrible moral responsibility rested upon Mr. Parnell and the Land League leaders for their failure adequately to denounce the crimes and outrages which were perpetrated in Ireland by those who believed that they were serving the purposes and carrying out the real wishes of the principal members of the league. His speech during the debate on the address at the opening of the session of 1883 set forth this uncompromising belief of his with a force which made a profound impression at the time upon English public opinion. Forster was being openly attacked, not merely by the Parnellites, but by English Radicals, as though, forsooth, the lamentable condition of Ireland, and the crimes and conspiracies which were at that time being dragged to light, were in some mysterious fashion the fruits of his two years’ secretaryship. It was in the midst of a debate in which this idea seemed to pervade the minds of not a few, that he interposed, and brought against Mr. Parnell the most tremendous indictment ever laid against a responsible politician in the English Parliament by a fellow-member. No one who was a witness of that exciting scene when Mr. Forster, speaking amid the furious cries of Mr. Parnell’s

followers, and the wild cheers of the English members, laid statement after statement before the House in support of his opinion as to the moral responsibility of Mr. Parnell, will ever forget it. Nor was the impression which he made upon the mind of England lessened by the fact that Mr. Parnell, instead of attempting to reply to the indictment brought against him, took refuge in personal abuse of his accuser. This was the last important episode in connection with Ireland of Mr. Forster's career in the House of Commons. For the future he was able to feel that he had at least liberated his mind upon that subject which had always been uppermost in his thoughts—the outrages,—and that nothing further was needed from him to enlighten the opinion of the public.

In the early part of the session of 1883 the question of our obligations in South Africa, and our duty towards native chiefs who had trusted in our promises, arose in connection with affairs in Bechuanaland. Forster, it is hardly necessary to say, strenuously supported the rights of the natives. No other line would have been possible to him at any period in his life—unless he had been prepared to deny his own most dearly cherished convictions and to reverse the whole current of his sympathies. Yet, seeing that his warm support of the claims of native chiefs who had jeopardized their own interests because of their belief in the honour of England brought him into collision with the Government, there were some who professed to think that it was rather for the purpose of attacking ministers than of serving the people of South Africa that he had taken action. It is needless to discuss this charge here. All his communications with the Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, as well as with Mr. Mackenzie and the other enlightened Englishmen who strove to procure justice for the weak races of South Africa, might be cited in refutation of the accusation. It was one which affected Forster himself far too slightly, however, to be worthy of special notice. He was only conscious of the fact that he was treading in the footsteps of his father and his uncle. The traditional contempt for “the nigger” was something the nature of which he was not even able to conceive, and he was every bit as anxious to see the people of Bechuanaland treated with justice by the English Government as he would have been if they had been inhabitants of his own Wharfedale.

For the remainder of his life, South African affairs occupied much of Mr. Forster's time, and he threw himself into the cause of the natives with all his old enthusiasm. With characteristic energy and thoroughness he made a careful study

of the South African Blue books, at that period abnormally numerous and voluminous, unearthed the telegraphic despatch of the English general, upon which the Bechuanas relied in their appeal for help, and completely refuted the plea of the Government that these people were not our allies, and that we were in no way responsible for what happened to them. This point gained, he did not relax his efforts, but continued, both in the House of Commons and outside, to urge their claims, until he had secured the establishment of a protectorate over the country of Bechuanaland.

The question next arose of a disputed boundary between the Transvaal and Bechuanaland, and, after a long wrangle between the High Commissioner and the Boer leaders, both the High Commissioner and a Boer deputation came to England. The proposal of the Transvaal was to so extend its borders in the direction of Bechuanaland as to include not only the most fertile "gardens" or farms of the natives, but also to take in the main road from Cape Colony north-west to Central Africa. This road, being bounded on the west side by the waterless Kalahari desert, was the only possible route outside the Transvaal by which our traders could reach the rapidly opening native markets in the centre of the continent.

Mr. Forster's study of the country on behalf of the Bechuanas at once enabled him to see that this proposal, if agreed to, would completely shut out British trade from the markets of the future, and he exerted himself in every way to prevent so disastrous a result. After an anxious struggle, he was successful in this. The Boers were given a considerable portion of native territory, and were forgiven a large part of their acknowledged debt to England; but though their boundary was brought to within a few miles of the road, they were not allowed to include it. Thus the trade route to the interior of Africa was preserved to British commerce, and a service rendered to the empire, the value of which, in but a few years, will be reckoned in sums of millions annually.

On the return of the Boer delegates, a new attempt was made to spoil Mr. Forster's work. A deputy-commissioner, Mr. John Mackenzie, who had resided for twenty-five years in the locality, had been selected by the High Commissioner when in England, and appointed to administer the new territory. Intrigues were now set on foot in this district, emanating from the Transvaal, to upset the Government of her Majesty in Bechuanaland. These were supported by similar intrigues carried on at Cape Town by friends and sympathizers with the Boers. They resulted in the resignation of the Deputy-

Commissioner, and the appointment of another, who endeavoured, by various forms of surrender and conciliation, to appease the Transvaal agitators, who, however, soon reduced the commencement of government which had been established to chaos. The natives were attacked, murdered, and robbed, and her Majesty's representative was personally threatened.

Again Mr. Forster urged upon the Government the necessity of fulfilling their obligations and enforcing respect to the Queen and Government. With the assistance, this time, of Mr. Chamberlain, who had before opposed any interference, he was successful in obtaining the despatch of Sir Charles Warren's expedition, before which the marauders of the Transvaal retreated across the border without firing a shot. A settled government was at length established, and the Bechuanas placed in the enjoyment of a certain measure of peace.

It will be noticed that throughout this affair, which extended over nearly three years, the keynote of his action and his argument was the fulfilment of obligations. These, once undertaken, he held to be sacred. He frequently urged the folly of trying to shirk them, a course which he proved from history invariably led to shame, inconvenience, and increased expenditure.

To his Wife.

"Athenæum Club, November 12th, 1884.

"MY DEAREST WIFE,

"Our South African lecture went off well last evening. A good attendance. There was a dinner before the lecture, at which I presided, sitting between Merriman and Sir John Macdonald, the Canadian Premier, who was capital company. The room was very crowded and hot, and I went home with one of my bad colds, which, however, is better this morning, thanks to a longer night.

"I hurried down to receive Sir Charles Warren, who came to pay his parting call. He leaves to-morrow, having at last got his way with the War Office.

"His large force of volunteers is quite a new departure in military affairs, and immensely interested Oakeley; but the estimate is out this morning, and it is a staggering one—about £650,000 for the army, and £50,000 for the navy. This is penny-wise pound-foolish policy with a vengeance, and I expect the Radicals will be furious."

In the autumn of 1883 he paid another visit to the East.

His object, on this occasion, was to see for himself the changes which had been wrought in Bulgaria as the result of the Russo-Turkish war. He was delighted with what he saw in the new principality. The growth of civilization, the capacity for self-government shown throughout the Balkan provinces, and the manifest love of education cherished by those who had so recently escaped from a cruel bondage, all satisfied him that the fruits of the events of 1877 and 1878 had been wholly good. The journey, the first part of which was spent on board the hospitable yacht of Mr. (now Sir John) Pender, did him good. Writing to his wife on the homeward journey, he spoke of its beneficial effects, and added that he was returning home "keen for work." An account of the impressions which he derived whilst in the East, appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of October 31st.

The year 1884 was one in which Forster displayed special activity in political life. He had recovered completely from the effects of the worry and anxiety of his Irish secretaryship; he felt himself absolved by past events from the necessity of devoting any large portion of his time to those Irish questions which occupied so much of the attention of Parliament, and he was able to devote all his strength of mind and body to matters in which he took the deepest personal interest. Of these the proceedings in South Africa have already been mentioned. In domestic politics the question of the hour was that of the Household Suffrage Bill, which was brought forward early in the session, only to be rejected by the House of Lords. He gave his warmest support to this measure, and, after its rejection, he was prominent among those who took part in the agitation in the country on its behalf, and against the House of Lords. The greatest of these popular demonstrations was that held at Leeds on October 4th. The scene of the gathering was Woodhouse Moor, on which, nearly twenty years before, Forster had appeared as an advocate of Parliamentary reform, at a time when the artisans of the towns were still waiting for enfranchisement. True to his faith in popular Government, he once more presented himself before a West Riding audience, on a spot of historic interest. Many scores of thousands of persons had met to demonstrate their resolve that the Reform Bill should be carried, despite the House of Lords, and Forster received from them a welcome of special warmth. It was the last great public gathering of the kind he was destined to attend.

But a question far surpassing, in the intensity of the interest which it aroused, that of the Household Suffrage Bill,

engaged attention during the year. It was that of the Soudan, and of the fate of General Gordon. For the Egyptian policy of the English Government Forster had no responsibility. He had left the Ministry before the intervention of this country at Cairo had been resolved upon, and though keenly interested in the course of events, he had not taken a prominent part in the debates on Egyptian questions. His chief interest in these questions seemed, indeed, to be based upon his life-long abhorrence of slavery. But from the time when the resolve of the English Government to abandon the Soudan was taken, and when General Gordon was despatched to Khartoum for the purpose of superintending the operation, Forster began to take an active and prominent part in the Parliamentary debates upon the question. Added to his personal interest in the slavery question, was his strong admiration for the character of General Gordon. From the moment at which his figure became the central one in connection with the affairs of Egypt, Forster's interest in these affairs became deep and absorbing.

The policy of the Government met with his strong disapproval. Hesitation, and a timid shrinking from responsibilities, not because they had not been incurred, but because they were too arduous and costly in their character to be easily fulfilled, were failings which he had always strongly condemned, and he condemned them now with special emphasis when they affected not only the honour of England but the very life of such a man as Gordon. At the outset of the session of 1884, Forster had criticized unsparingly the blunder committed by ministers in their dealings with Egypt. His speech naturally excited the anger of the partisan press. He was taunted as "the candid friend," and once again he had to submit to that wholesale imputation of motives to which by this time he had become so well accustomed. But he was in earnest now, if ever he had been in earnest in his life, and though he felt keenly his position of isolation, and regretted now, as he had ever done, the anger of his constituents and his old political friends, he refused to be moved by these things so much as a hair's-breadth. His whole heart was filled with the idea of Gordon's danger at Khartoum—and that he was in real danger there Forster had been one of the very first to perceive—and of the dishonour which must attach to England if he were left to perish. To ministers, alas! it was not given to see Gordon's danger so clearly, and they resisted any acknowledgment of it, and put off any attempt to succour their agent. Forster, on his part, insisted, with what

he himself felt to be wearisome iteration, upon endeavouring to impress the truth on the minds of his former colleagues.

It is not to be denied that his speeches and questions on the subject of Khartoum and Gordon, during the session of 1884, were very damaging to the Ministry, and one cannot be surprised at the bitterness with which they were resented by partisan newspapers and organizations. The question now, however, is not whether they did or did not injure a Liberal Ministry, but whether they were founded upon sound or unsound views of events in the Soudan. To that question only one answer can be returned. It unhappily proved that Forster was right when he strove, with an earnestness which was remarkable even for him, to awaken the minds of ministers to the reality of Gordon's danger, and when he besought them not to delay until it was too late the attempt to carry to him the succour which he was certain to require. That being the case, the question of party discipline, and of the extent to which he was guilty of injuring his own political associates, is not one that any man possessed of ordinary self-respect will care to discuss. But it is impossible for one who, like the present writer, was in almost constant intercourse with Mr. Forster during that terrible time of national suspense, to refrain from speaking of the extraordinary depth of feeling which he showed with regard to the question of Gordon's safety. If it had been a question of saving the life of one who stood nearest to him in blood, he could not have felt it more intensely. His voice would quiver under the emotion which stirred him, and his eye grow dim as he discussed Gordon's character and history, at that time when, alone in the Soudan, he was standing between a surging mass of barbarism and the helpless creatures whom it threatened to submerge. To any one who knew Forster, the notion that he would allow the interests of any political party, and still less his own personal interests as a politician, to interfere with the performance of a duty so sacred as that which he felt he owed to the honour of his country and to General Gordon, must have seemed utterly absurd. If his whole political future had depended upon his action on the question of the Soudan he would not have wavered in the course which he took. Whether under the censure or the applause of his fellow-countrymen, he felt bound to go straight forward, in the hope that he might effect his end, and induce the Ministry to fulfil effectually the responsibilities which they had incurred at Khartoum. It can hardly, I think, be doubted that the resolve of ministers to send an expedition to the relief of Gordon and

the beleaguered garrison was largely due to the persistency with which Forster pressed them on the question. That the expedition arrived too late to effect its purpose was no fault of his.

It was in the course of one of his most urgent appeals to ministers not to delay the sending out of an expedition that Forster used words regarding Mr. Gladstone which were strangely misinterpreted at the time, and which were used by a section of his political opponents from that time forward as a means of assailing him. Speaking of the danger of Gordon's position, he said, "I believe every one but the Prime Minister is already convinced of that danger, . . . and I attribute his not being convinced to his wonderful power of persuasion. He can persuade most people of most things, and, above all, he can persuade himself of almost anything." It is difficult now to realize the fact that these words were resented by Lord Hartington as "a bitter and personal and evidently highly prepared and long-reflected-over attack upon the sincerity of Mr. Gladstone." They were nothing of the kind, and Forster immediately repudiated the notion that he had ever dreamed of imputing personal insincerity to one to whom the charge, he declared, was peculiarly inapplicable. Nevertheless, in the heat of partisan anger, his declaration regarding Mr. Gladstone was treated as a mortal sin. The Bradford Liberal Association was summoned together to censure him, and he was subjected to insults and annoyances which might well have led him to retire in weariness and disgust from an arena in which apparently respect for independence of opinion and honesty of conviction was altogether subordinated to party considerations.

The storm of party anger which was raised against him raged with a fierceness which would have intimidated most men, but Mr. Forster neither quailed before it nor indulged in any demonstrations of defiance. He simply bore himself with manly calmness amid the tempest, maintaining the even tenor of his way, and continuing his determined efforts to induce ministers to send their expedition to the Soudan at the earliest possible moment, as though no such thing as a caucus or a vote of censure at Bradford was known to him. The only remark he ever made regarding the speech of Lord Hartington, which had been the signal for this outburst of political intolerance, was that which he made to Lord Hartington himself in the lobby on the evening on which the incident occurred. "You were very unfair to me to-night; but you had such a bad case, that I suppose you could not help yourself." It was

immediately after this episode that he spent many days in seeking out all the authorities on the question—soldiers, travellers, and men of science—in order to ascertain the earliest moment at which the Nile would rise to a sufficient height to permit of an expedition being sent up the river to Khartoum.

At last the Government were convinced, and the expedition started. Its progress was followed with breathless interest by the nation. This is not the place in which to tell the tragical story of its end and of the fate of Gordon. So far as Forster was concerned, the news, when it came, fell upon him with all the weight of a great personal affliction. "I can think of nothing but Gordon and the Soudan," he notes in his diary the day after he first heard the fatal tidings. No one who saw much of him at that period of his life can forget the unceasing interest which he showed in every phase of the expedition under Lord Wolseley, the eagerness with which he welcomed all who could tell anything new regarding the position of General Gordon, and the care with which he strove to make himself master of all the facts which bore upon his fate. There was something singularly touching in the depth of the feeling which Forster showed all through this painful episode in our national history. It was a feeling which seemed rather to befit a young enthusiast than the busy man of affairs, who had passed through so much that was calculated to try his temper and chill his sympathies. How young his heart had remained through all his varied and bitter experiences, and how warm and true were his affections, was proved to those around him by the grief with which he mourned the fate of General Gordon.

There was one other great question which, after the death of General Gordon, occupied the first place in Forster's mind. This was the question of the relationship of England to her colonies. To write the history of his connection with the question would be to tell the story of the Imperial Federation League. All through his public life Mr. Forster had been anxious to see the bonds made stronger which united England to the other portions of the empire. His address upon the colonies at Edinburgh in 1875, had given him an opportunity of expressing his profound sense of the imperial dignity and grandeur of our country. It was no new thing, this deep-seated idea of the glorious character of our heritage of empire. He had been conscious of it almost from boyhood, and in no small degree it had modified the influences of his birth and early training, putting him to a certain extent out of harmony with some, at least, of the traditions of the Society of Friends.

But along with the sense of the grandeur of our imperial position there had always been present a sense, not less strong, of the responsibility which it imposed upon us. He felt the full force of the parable of the talents, in this as in so many other matters that engaged his thoughts in public life. To have much was to owe much. All through his life he had believed this, and had striven to act up to the belief; and now, when his day's work was drawing to its appointed end, he sought to carry out this cardinal doctrine of his moral creed in the largest field of action which was open to him.

He had consistently preached our duties towards the weak and dependent subject races of the empire. He now found himself leading a movement, the object of which was to enable each portion of the empire to do its duty by the whole. On July 29th, 1884, he mentions in his diary, "A noteworthy event to-day. I took the chair at the conference on Colonial Federation at Westminster Palace Hotel—a real success." The object of the conference, which was attended by many influential representatives of the colonies, as well as by leading members of both political parties, was the formation of a society for the special purpose of enlightening public opinion throughout the empire, "as to the advantages of permanent unity, and as to the nature of the different forms of federal government, so that the people of the empire, both in these isles and beyond the seas, may be the better able to decide as to the exact form of that government which they may prefer whenever they shall feel that the time has arrived for its adoption." The conference not only resulted in the formation of a provisional committee, but in a demonstration of no ordinary character against the policy of those who are prepared to view with favour rather than with distaste the withdrawal of our colonies from all direct connection with the mother-country. Forster's speech in favour of federation was an emphatic one, and at the request of the conference he accepted the presidency of the newly founded committee. An adjourned meeting of the conference was held on November 18th to report progress, and again Mr. Forster occupied the chair. A detailed scheme for the formation of the Imperial Federation League was laid before those present on behalf of the provisional committee, and once more Mr. Forster urged the necessity of union upon the representatives of all portions of the empire. He was strongly in favour of creating a sentiment in favour of federation, and from that time forward he laboured assiduously, both by speech and pen, in order to effect this object. The details of a scheme of federation, he

felt, would come in good time; the first thing was to create in the minds of the English people throughout the empire the conviction that federation was to be desired. The good work to which he thus devoted much of his time in the latest months of his public life is still in its infancy. Forster himself had glowing visions of its future growth. It was not given to him to live to see them realized; but if the day should ever come which sees the British empire united in the bonds of an equitable federation, to Forster will belong the honour of having been foremost among those who planted the seeds of this mighty and most beneficent revolution. How deep his interest was for the remainder of his life in the cause of the Imperial Federation League was shown, not only by his devotion to the business of the committee, but by the eagerness with which he welcomed every new convert to the cause of federation. Writing to his wife immediately before the meeting of the conference in November, he said—

“Athenæum Club, November 14th, 1884.

“The more I look at it, the more I find that Tuesday’s meeting is critical, and its success, I fear, depends on my opening speech. I must not only carefully consider what to say, but I must have Sunday and Monday for conference with Oakeley and one or two others, and also I must be myself in the arrangements for the conduct of the meeting, speakers, etc. I have two agents-general still to see; but I hope to see them to-morrow. . . .

“There is more hopeful news about Gordon—see papers’ account of answer to question—but as yet Government does not know the date of the letter or its contents.

“I fear my dearest wife will think me faithless in not coming down; but, after all, this colonial business remains my great work.

“The Cape debate yesterday was a poor affair. I thought it best to reserve myself for Thursday, if necessary to speak at all; but Chamberlain spoke well. I told him and Childers that, as at last they were behaving well, I would glorify them if they wished it; but Chamberlain said ‘that would finish them!’

“Thine,
“W. E. FORSTER.”

Again writing to Mrs. Forster, in June, 1885, he encloses a Reuter’s telegram from Melbourne, announcing that the Victorian Branch Imperial Federation League had been formed

at a crowded and enthusiastic meeting, and says, "My dearest wife,—I was woken this morning by the enclosed telegram. Is it not pleasant? We may set it against many unpleasant things. Good of Reuter to send it."

During the winter of 1884–5 he suffered severely in consequence of an injury which necessitated the removal of the great-toe nail. For some time in the early part of 1885, after undergoing this operation, his appearance was such as to cause anxiety to his friends; but as the spring advanced he recovered, and again began to work with his accustomed energy. The session was an eventful one, inasmuch as it witnessed the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government and the installation of Lord Salisbury in office.

At that time, the Irish Question was still much in men's minds, and there were rumours abroad of an intention on the part of some members of the Liberal Government to attempt to meet the demands of Mr. Parnell and his party for local home rule. The following letter, addressed to his son-in-law, deals with this subject—

TO MR. R. VERE O'BRIEN.

"80, Eccleston Square, June 6th, 1885.

"F——'s report of my talk last night is very correct; but I write a line to say—First, that you will, I know, consider it strictly confidential; and, secondly, that I am anxious to get from you as soon as may be your opinion as to this Dublin board.

"In itself, it is good. Education and draining ought to be locally managed. No doubt the board would mismanage at first, but there would be no harm in this. Experience would be gained, and home quarrels would to some extent replace hostility to the Imperial Government. But the real question is—Can such board be prevented from being a lever for separation—or, rather, for Grattan's Parliament, which means separation first, and then reconquest?

"I gather from to-day's papers that the split in the Cabinet is not yet mended, and I expect Dilke and Chamberlain are holding out for a public promise of this board, without which they will not assent to the Crimes Bill. This accounts for C——'s earnest desire that I should point to some such measure in the debate on the Crimes Act. He wants to make use of me in Cabinet discussion. I ask myself whether it would be safe, and might not do good, for me to point to strong local government, and express a wish for it,

if we could have reason to believe that it would not be used for separation.

“It will be a pity, however, if the Land Purchase Bill gets ignored, and I wish you would send your letter to the *Pall Mall*;—if you like to send it to me, I will forward it. . . .

“Yours ever affectionately,

“W. E. FORSTER.”

Forster's chief Parliamentary work during the year was not, however, connected with any of the great political questions. He had been appointed chairman of the committee to consider the Manchester Ship Canal Bill. In two previous sessions it had been impossible to get the bill through both Houses of Parliament, because of the immense magnitude of the cases which were presented on behalf of the promoters and opponents of the measure respectively. It seemed certain that the bill would fail again for the same reason; and it undoubtedly would have failed if it had fallen into the hands of any man whose energy and power of work were less than Forster's. As it was, by dint of sheer indomitable industry, such as that which in past times had enabled him to manage the business of the Education Office and to see the Education Bill through committee, and more recently had aided him in the performance of his great work in Ireland, he was able to carry the inquiry regarding the canal through committee, and to secure for the people of Manchester the opportunity which they so eagerly coveted. But the cost to himself was very great. It was all the greater because, along with the heavy labour which was thus imposed upon him, he had to contend with not a few personal “worries.” His relations with the Radical section of the Bradford Liberals were again seriously strained. They could not apparently forget the independent line he had taken with regard both to South African politics and to the relief of General Gordon. Abundantly as events had justified the course which he took, he was not forgiven by many persons in his own constituency, because in taking that course he had come into collision with the Ministry.

The Redistribution Act—of which it may be remarked parenthetically he had been from the first a very warm supporter—had led to the sub-division of Bradford into different constituencies. It was impossible for him ever again to sit as the representative of “the borough of Bradford” in the House of Commons. His long connection with the whole constituency must end, through no fault on either side. Forster determined, however, that it should not end until he had publicly

and formally "given an account of his stewardship" to those who for twenty-five years had enabled him to speak in their name in Parliament. He asked the Liberal Association as usual to make arrangements for the meeting at which he was to speak. They declined to do so, and it was left to him individually to summon his constituents to hear his review of nearly a quarter of a century of public work.

So high did the feeling of the official Liberals run, that active attempts were made to induce his constituents to stay away from his meeting, which he had fixed for August 1st. It was with the knowledge that there was this bitter feeling against him in certain quarters in Bradford, and that he was left, after all these years of loyal and devoted service, practically alone by the recognized chiefs of the Liberal party, that he prepared to meet those of his constituents who were willing to hear his farewell address. Few, probably, of those who—doubtless from conscientious motives—adopted this attitude of hostility towards him, knew the pain which they occasioned. Nothing but a sense of the value of that principle of political independence for which he was struggling, and a consciousness of his own single-mindedness, sustained him.

Before I speak of the great meeting, in which for the last time he discussed those questions in which throughout his life he had been so deeply interested, I must quote the account given by his secretary, Mr. Loring, of the work he went through at that time. This was practically his farewell to public life in England, and the reader will be interested in knowing how these closing days of a great career were occupied.

"On Friday, July 1st," writes Mr. Loring, "I came to Eccleston Square early (9.30) at Mr. Forster's request, as there was much business to be got through, and little time available for it. He was to speak at Bradford the next day, and we were to go down to Wharfedale that evening. The Manchester Ship Canal Committee, of which he was chairman, had been reduced to three members, and was working at great pressure. A large sum of money had been spent upon the bill before it reached Mr. Forster's committee, without its fate having been decided, and he felt it imperative that a decision should be arrived at upon it by his committee, in order to avoid the continuance of this waste of money. By his personal influence he had induced both sides to forego the repetition of large portions of the evidence given at former committees, and he strained every nerve in order to ensure the fullest attention and the utmost available time being given by the committee to the evidence which remained. At this time the session was

drawing to a close, and the evidence which it was proposed to take was still far from being completed. The only hope was for the committee to come to a decision without hearing evidence upon a portion of the bill. If this was to be done, the decision must be announced that day. We worked at high pressure all the morning, but did not make much impression on the mass of correspondence which seemed to be in a chronic state of accumulation during those ship canal days. Mr. Forster told me what papers, etc., he should require for the preparation of his speech, which he had not as yet touched, and adding, 'Put these papers in the bag, and we'll do some of them at Wharfeside,' he at 11.50 got into a hansom, and drove to his committee. I had occasion to bring him a letter that day between one and two, and found the committee-room closed, and the decision being arrived at. I got to King's Cross about 5.30. Mr. Forster arrived some three or four minutes before the train started. We dined in the train. He told me that he had not had any luncheon, and he certainly looked as if he needed food. He had been from a nine o'clock breakfast until 8.30 without breaking his fast. We reached Bradford at 10.30, and after Mr. Forster had paid a visit to the club, started again for Wharfeside, where we arrived about midnight. We soon went to bed, Mr. Forster remarking that our hands would be full the next day. We began upon the speech immediately after breakfast the next morning. After luncheon, we started in the guard's van of a goods train for Otley, where we were to catch a passenger train to Bradford. All the warehouses were closed at Bradford, and I remember wondering as we walked to the hotel where the meeting was to come from. We assembled in a small room off the hall, and though some anxiety was at first shown (not by Mr. Forster) as to the tone of the meeting, when we heard the people taking up 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow,' from the organ, we knew that all was well."

I have quoted this account because of the proof which it affords that even then Mr. Forster's power of work was far above that of most men. The speech, which was prepared in a few hours under the circumstances described by Mr. Loring, was undoubtedly one of the best which he ever made. It was a full and clear review of the political history of England during the twenty-four years and a half of his Parliamentary life, combined with a most powerful exposition of the principles by which his actions had been guided. No one who heard it as it fell from his lips in graphic, telling phrases, each one of which seemed to arouse an echo in the hearts of the audience,

could have credited the fact that its preparation had only been begun that morning, and after such a day of labour as Forster had passed through on Friday. For more than an hour he engaged the close attention of the great multitude packed within the walls of the hall, as he spoke of the American Civil War and the part he had taken in putting an end to the rankling disputes between England and the United States which it left behind; of the Reform question, its many vicissitudes and ultimate triumph; of Ireland and the work which had fallen to his hands there; and of the Education Act and its fruits. It is noticeable that in his speech he may be almost said to have slurred over the passing of the Education Act. It was evident that he had no wish merely to dwell upon his own achievements. But he was strongly bent upon defending himself from the attacks of those who railed against him for the part he had taken with regard to the expedition to Khartoum. Now, as at all times, he was bent upon having justice for himself, whilst readily granting it to everybody else. One or two passages in the speech have a special interest in view of the fact that this was the last occasion upon which he ever addressed a public audience.

“There is no doubt what the great principles of Liberalism are: equality before the law, progress, the abolition of class restrictions, freedom of the press, ay, and a determination that neither king, nor peer, nor mob shall take away the liberty of any Englishman or Irishman. . . . If there is one thing more than another that I hope to live for and take part in politically, it is the hope that before I die I may see the British realm—a realm extending all the world over, her children, whom she has sent out, themselves self-governing communities—united with her in a bond of peace that shall be an example to the world. Again, I must thank you for your past confidence and support. And let me say one word. You know that I am in the habit of speaking out. If I have ever hurt any man’s feelings in Bradford I am very sorry. I would beg his pardon, if I knew the particular case, and that I was wrong. . . . Again, I thank you. I thank you for this more than for anything else—that for the long time I have been your member, the time that I have taken part in the government of the nation or in the deliberations of Parliament, I have been, not your mere delegate, not your mere mouthpiece, but your representative, doing what I thought to be right; and upon no other condition will I serve you in the future.”

Such were the last words spoken by Mr. Forster to a Bradford audience. They were so characteristic of the man, and

described so correctly the position which he had held in Parliament, that it was easy to understand the mighty shout of approbation, almost passionate in its character, which went up when he uttered them. Whatever might be the judgment of class or caucus, it was evident that the people of Bradford were on his side in his resolute maintenance of the right of a member of the English Parliament to follow the dictates of his own conscience rather than the wishes of a political organization.

After the meeting he went back to Burley in the highest spirits. That which gave him the greatest pleasure was not the largeness or the enthusiasm of his audience; but the fact that here and there he had noticed in the densely packed seats the faces of old friends, who were allied to what might be called the official section of the Liberal party in the borough, but who had been true to their representative, and had turned up to support him at that critical moment. With what bright confidence he spoke of the future to one who accompanied him in the train on his return to Burley! He told of his coming visit to Germany, for the sake of his wife's health, and of his consequent abandonment of a projected journey to Canada. "I must be back in October for the election," he said; "there will be plenty for me to do then." Little did those who heard him imagine that he was never again to appear upon the platform where he had so long been a familiar figure, and which he had that afternoon occupied with such conspicuous power and success. On the following day (Sunday), he returned to town, in order that he might be in time to resume his work on the clauses of the Manchester Canal Bill on Monday morning.

But little has been said in this volume of his merits as a speaker. They were, however, not only noticeable, but peculiar to himself. He never attempted to rival the oratory of Mr. Bright—of which he was a warm, almost a passionate, admirer—or the wonderful flexibility of style and unsurpassed command of language which have given Mr. Gladstone his great place among Parliamentary speakers. Forster's gifts were entirely different from those possessed by Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone. Yet, in his own way, he was one of the most effective Parliamentary speakers of his time. If his sentences were somewhat rough and unpolished, and if they lacked the wealth of illustration and the brilliancy of style which distinguish such men as those I have named, they had a force and freshness which made them always tell upon those whom he addressed. Especially was this the case when he was speaking upon some question on which he felt deeply. At such times, the warmth of his feelings was reflected in the

manifest emotion with which he spoke, and no one was allowed to remain in doubt as to what he really meant and felt. He was a severe critic of his own speeches. But, even when he was most dissatisfied with their imperfections, and when he felt that his defects of style and manner must always prevent him from attaining any position as an orator, he had one un-failing source of consolation. He might have been too heavy, or too long, but he "got out what he wanted to say;" and this, after all, seemed to him to be that which was best worth striving after. To him at least speech had not been given for the purpose of concealing his thoughts, and though he might not tickle the ears of his hearers with poetic metaphors or polished phrases, he never failed to impress those who heard him with a sense of his absolute sincerity, whilst often his roughly-hewn sentences, so manifestly springing from his heart, and not from his lips, moved his audience more deeply than any flight of mere eloquence could have done. The reader has seen with what ease, or rather with what speed, his last speech was composed. But that rapidity of preparation was only attained after long and painful practice. In his early days, the labour of preparing a speech was very great to him. Often many days would be devoted to the task, and when it had been performed he would feel profoundly dissatisfied with the manner in which it had been executed. Throughout his life he never grudged any time or labour that might be needed to enable him to do any work he had undertaken well; and even to the last he never tried to put off those to whom he spoke with a carelessly-prepared speech. Practice had enabled him to put his thoughts together more easily, and to express them more fluently and forcibly than in his early days; but this increased facility in speaking did not absolve him from the duty of carefully ascertaining and sifting his facts, and making sure beforehand that what he had to say to Parliament or his constituents was unassailable so far as its accuracy was concerned. This patient preparation of his case before he ventured to put it before the world was perhaps the feature of his public speaking which gave its highest value to what he said in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen. They knew that when he opened his lips he would, so far as in him lay, tell them that which was true and to the point regarding the question he was discussing; and so, even when they differed from him in judgment, they learned to trust him in statement.

CHAPTER XXV.

ILLNESS AND DEATH.

THE account of Mr. Forster's illness and last days, which I am allowed to print here, is from the pen of his wife.

"No one who had seen my husband at the end of his last session would have guessed that his work was done, and that all that remained of a life which had been so full of wide and fruitful activity, of conflict, and of storms, was now to be contracted within the walls of a sick-room during weary months of weakness and pain. The closing weeks of his Parliamentary work had been filled with plans for fresh work during the vacation. Urgent invitations came to him from the Cape, to visit that colony and hold meetings there. He was also pressingly urged to go to Canada, and advocate the cause of Imperial Federation; and this he would have enjoyed, and it was, in fact, decided on and the places were taken, when he gave it up at the last moment, because my health was not strong and he could not make up his mind to leave me.

He had seldom had a greater pressure of work upon him than during the last eight weeks of the session, when he was Chairman of the Committee on the Manchester Canal Bill. During all that time he may be said to have worked, almost at a stretch, from ten in the morning till he came home long after midnight from the House of Commons. Immediately after breakfast he wrote letters with his secretary, and saw the numerous visitors who came to him by appointment, to take counsel with him on the next step in the Federation movement, of which he was the animating and directing spirit,—or upon the complications of South Africa, and the best means of at once forming public opinion and keeping the needful pressure upon the Government,—or else to ask the advice and help in some personal matter which were never refused. His library, as has been said, was like the office of a Minister, a constant stream of persons succeeding one another until it was time for him to go to the committee.

The committee lasted from twelve to four, and during that time he was unable to relax his attention for a moment, until the brain grew so wearied with the continued strain, that during the last quarter of an hour he could often hardly keep himself from dropping asleep from sheer exhaustion. The strain on his attention was probably the greater because the inquiry turned so much on scientific and engineering points which were not familiar to him, but which, as one of the leading counsel told me, 'he insisted on thoroughly understanding;' and, on the other hand, Mr. Loring says, 'To illustrate the closeness of the attention which the committee required of him, I would mention that on the frequent occasions on which I had to see him at the committee room, even if it were only to hand him a note, or say a dozen words to him, counsel would invariably stop in their address or stop the witness in his evidence—until they considered that the chairman could give his full attention to their words.'

When the committee ended at four o'clock, his refreshment was usually a game of whist at the club, and then came the evening at the House, and the late sitting.

But he seemed at the time to bear the strain without suffering, and finished with a long day of vigorous work over the arrears of his correspondence. 'We started by the evening boat on August 9th, on our journey to Baden,' writes his daughter. 'He and Mr. Loring were working tremendously hard all day, sorting papers and writing letters. When I went in about five o'clock, to take them some tea, the floor was so strewn with letters that I stopped to count them, and father told me triumphantly that he had not one unanswered letter left.' He only finished his work about half an hour before we went to the station, and I remember how vigorous and buoyant he seemed as we set off. But this did not last long: it was as if he began to flag directly the tension of work was relaxed, and before we got to Baden he had become very languid and tired. I was not, however, uneasy at first; thinking it was only the reaction of fatigue which almost always followed the end of a session, and that a few days' rest was all he needed.

Just after our arrival at Baden, he was shocked and saddened by the news of the sudden death of his old friend, Lord Houghton. 'Your brother,' he wrote to Lady Galway, 'was one of my oldest friends, and there are few men on whose friendship I more absolutely relied. He was very kind to me before I was known or cared about. I had the highest reliance on his insight and knowledge of men, and

therefore on his political forecasts, as well as the greatest pleasure in his wit and genius. . . . I believe you were with him at the last; if so, that must, dear Lady Galway, be a great comfort to yourself.

‘Yours most truly,
‘W. E. FORSTER.

During the first week of our stay at Baden, he took several walks, and we made excursions to the various sights in the neighbourhood; but he continued languid and depressed, and about a week after our arrival he was attacked by a bad shivering fit, and we had to call in a doctor. His first view of the case was that he was suffering from overwork and exhaustion of nervous energy, and he told my husband that he must have a long and complete rest, and that he would not be fit to stand the toil of the autumn elections. I think we considered this at the time a needlessly alarming view, little knowing what was before us. But the strange languor and depression continued, with frequent shiverings, and the remedies tried seemed to do no good; ‘In the morning doctor tested my temperature—all right, in fact all my organs right,—I am a puzzle to him and myself,’ is the entry in his diary on one of these days.

In spite of the languor which made him feel unequal to any exertion, he dictated a letter to his election agent in Bradford about arrangements for the coming election, and wrote a letter to Sir George Bowen on Imperial Federation—

To SIR GEORGE BOWEN.

‘Hotel Holland, Baden-Baden, Germany.

‘MY DEAR SIR GEORGE BOWEN,

‘I must again thank you for your letters, and especially for the copies of the reprint of your most interesting letter of May 15th, valuable as it is both for its suggestions, and for the weight of your unmatched experience. I had been intending to go to Canada this autumn, in response to an invitation from the Canadian Branch of our Federation League, but Mrs. Forster is so far from well—knocked up by London and rheumatism—that I have had to bring her here for the waters.

‘Our Federation movement is gaining great strength—the idea possesses men’s minds; but we might throw it back greatly by any premature plan, and I am very anxious to find out the real views and wishes of leading colonists. My own

impression is that, at first, at any rate, we had better aim at concert among the Governments rather than at an Imperial Parliament. Thanks to steam and telegraph, time and space no longer make such concert very difficult; but distance does prevent a member from being fully in touch with his constituents.

'We must remember that in order to realize Federation, we only want (1) an organization for common defence and (2) a common foreign policy. Practically great steps have been recently made, not merely as regards defence—thanks to Australian aid—but, as regards foreign affairs. I do not believe that any Colonial Secretary will in the future venture to disregard any large self-governing colony in negotiating with any foreign Government in matters affecting such colony; and the interests and defence of our settlements, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, will I believe be much more considered in future.

'Believe me to remain,

'Yours very sincerely,

'W. E. FORSTER.'

One day we drove up to the Fremersberg, and he enjoyed one of those wide panoramic views of which he was so fond—ascending, I remember, though with slow and languid steps, to the highest point of the tower, and all his old interest and pleasure returning as he pointed out the distant objects. 'We drove up to the Fremersberg Thurm—a grand view—Strasbourg Cathedral quite clear,' he notes in his diary for August 19th.

But the sense of illness increased, and as he seemed to be gaining nothing at Baden he decided to return home. 'The last thing I remember particularly about him at Baden,' writes his daughter, 'is his going to the Glarus workshop, and choosing out with great care a collar for me, and aprons for Flo and Edith and Mary,—the end of his many presents to us all.'

By August 31st we were all settled at home again, and it was a comfort to find ourselves there; but the shadows of illness still deepened, though it was not till a few days after our return to Eccleston Square that he was quite confined to bed. Dr. Wilson Fox was then called in, and he insisted on our having a trained night-nurse. The doctors were perplexed to account for his great weakness, and for the continuance of fever, which never ran high, but could not be subdued; and they were disposed to believe that he had contracted a malarial fever at Baden. He seemed to have no

inquisitiveness himself about the causes of his illness; indeed, from the beginning to the end, it was strange to observe how little it occupied his thoughts, and how little he cared to talk about it, beyond just answering the doctor's questions. At this period he had not the least doubt that he should get well, and his only anxiety was that it should be in time for the elections. On this point his anxiety was incessant, and he continually questioned the doctors as to their opinion on it. But no words can describe the unvarying patience and sweetness of mood with which he met all the trials of illness, and the sense of utter weakness—most trying to him of all. No one ever heard one word of impatience or complaint fall from his lips, or saw one failure in his constant gentleness and consideration to all around him. The '*Recollections*' which our daughter Frances wrote for me afterwards, and from which I have already quoted, give an outline of this period.

'On Thursday, September 3rd,' she writes, 'I was to go down to Cobham for a night. He said something laughingly about my readiness to go and desert you. On my return he gave me some playful lines he had afterwards written, altogether withdrawing the charge. . . .

'On Monday, September 7th, Dr. Wilson Fox was called in, and he next day insisted on our having a trained night-nurse. This week seemed to mark a fresh stage in the illness. At this time his days were constantly occupied; he read the papers a great deal, but spoke little about public affairs. He read endlessly to himself, going through all the *Waverley Novels* and other old friends,—*Scott's Poems*, and stores of favourite ballad poetry. About eleven or twelve o'clock his secretary came to his bedside, and, when he was at all equal to it, they went through the morning's letters together, and he dictated or directed the answers. I don't think that in this month (September) he had actually put into words that he would not be able to fight his election himself; but I think, as day after day passed, he began to feel it less likely. He used sometimes to say, "The doctors are always saying I am better, but I never get well;" but he never expressed any regret at not being able to take part in things; he seemed to have settled with himself not to speak of it. Once or twice I heard him say that he believed he could make a single speech if necessary, but that he could not follow it up.'

He was not able to see many of his friends, but he was touched and pleased by the warm sympathy which his illness called forth, and deeply felt the kindness and interest manifested by the Queen, who sent constant inquiries. Lady Ely

wrote, asking for a report for her Majesty,—‘The Queen has telegraphed to me, she is so anxious to hear about Mr. Forster, and would like Dr. Wilson Fox to write to her about him,—she has such a regard for him, and also feels so much for your anxiety. Can you ask Dr. Fox to do so when you see him to-morrow?’ . . . After this time, by the Queen’s desire, Dr. Fox sent her full daily bulletins of his patient until there seemed to be a change for the better in his condition.

It would indeed be difficult to exaggerate the interest and anxiety with which the alternations of his long illness were watched by people of all classes, or the striking evidence afforded, in the numberless letters received from both friends and strangers, of the feelings of affection and trust which his public life had inspired. One correspondent writes, ‘Your portrait looks down upon me from my study wall as I write, and it has the place of highest honour. It would comfort you in your affliction if you could know how much you are thought of by thousands of whom you know as little personally as you know of me.’ Another writes to me, ‘He is one of the few men whose active services are of the highest consequence to his country. Whatever Providence may ordain, the past contains a noble record of public work.’ ‘I do trust that he is now mending,’ writes one who loved him with the loyalty of those who had worked under him, ‘and that the daily report will every day become more favourable. Everywhere that I have been there has been great anxiety felt for him, for the people who do not know him have such a respect for him, and those who do cannot but love him.’ ‘I have been watching,’ says a comparative stranger, ‘as tens of thousands of your countrymen have been watching, with great interest and thankfulness, such accounts as have appeared of your gradual progress towards recovery,—the country was never in greater need of you and of men like you.’

‘The country was never in greater need of you and of men like you;’—that was the keynote in all the expressions of regret and hope.

My husband’s own thoughts at this time often turned to Lord Shaftesbury, who was nearing the close of his life at Folkestone, and he was very anxious that I should write to express his sympathy with him in his illness, and his wish that, if well enough to receive a message, Lord Shaftesbury might be told how much he felt himself to have owed to his example in his public life. He dictated the message to me, and it was a pleasure to him to hear that it had been read to Lord Shaftesbury.

Towards the end of September there was some improvement in my husband's health; he was allowed to be carried downstairs daily for a few hours, and on the 6th of October we went to Norwood, in the hope that the fresher air might invigorate him. But the weather was cold and bad, and although at first we tried to hope that the change was answering, he really gained nothing, and at the end of a fortnight we returned to London.

In a letter which I wrote from Norwood about my husband's health, I said, 'In spite of occasional disappointing drawbacks, he hopes to be well enough to take part in public matters next month.' On looking back, it is difficult to see how we could have been so sanguine, but the doctors had not yet pronounced it impossible that he could take an active part in the election at Bradford, and he was still hoping against hope to do so. Writing to Mr. Killick from Norwood, he says, 'It is a relief to me to find I need not have St. George's Hall, and I suppose, if neither of the other candidates do so, I may fairly content myself with the Mechanics' Institute. It may make all the difference, as speech in the Hall means a constant strain. . . . As regards myself, I have not made much progress yet, but I do not despair. I think I shall return to London to-morrow, for I am hardly able to take advantage of this place yet.'

In the 'Notes' which I wrote from time to time during my husband's illness, I find the following about this date:—

'September 23rd.—I said to him how much I had admired the way in which he had been able to put aside political matters, and had not let them worry him. He assented that he had not been worried by them; "but," he said, "I think things over." His nights throughout his illness were very bad, but he often said that he had got accustomed to lying awake, and did not now mind it, and that in the long wakeful hours "he thought things over," especially the Irish problems, which never seemed far from his thoughts—reviewing them, and trying to look at them afresh.

'Now and then he would talk with his wonted animation. He said one day that he foresaw another crusade to make all schools secular; "but,"—with the greatest energy,—"I shall drive them out of that in the House." (September 30th) He told me, when I went in this morning, that he had had a bad night. "But how little suffering I have had in this illness! it has been *nothing at all*, compared with many." Then, speaking of a member of our family who was ill, "Give Mary my dear love, and tell her how deeply I feel for them both;

give her the message from me." (*October 3rd*) We had been reading in the Philippians together, and after referring back to the account of Philippi in the Acts, he recurred to his voyage in the Mediterranean:—"There was one morning he should never forget, the morning at Salonica; he had tried to describe it a little at Bradford;—the town lying along the slope of the hill above the sea;—our magnificent fleet at anchor;—and far away the great summit of Olympus rising." He was full of the impressions, both of that scene and of all the varied associations;—the old mythology past away, the mingled races, Mahometanism; and then the modern world,—the Western powers and England;—following out to himself the train of thought and the perplexities suggested by the long course of change and decay, flux and reflux, in religion and in human progress.

Norwood. Of late our morning time together has been more uncertain, as he has slept much better, so that often it has been near eight o'clock when he has sent for me. Till lately, if I went in soon after seven I used to find him already reading the Bible to himself. He said to me one morning, when we were speaking of his illness, "We have had some very blessed times together," and once he said most earnestly, "I would not have been without this illness for the world."

He talked very seldom about his illness, and his allusions to the sense of weakness, which tried him most of all, were often expressed in a half-playful way, more touching than complaint to those who heard him. After our return from *Norwood*, on *October 17th*, Sir William Jenner was called in. I think it was for the special purpose of deciding, with Dr. Wilson Fox, whether he must finally renounce the hope of taking any personal part in the election at the end of November. I suppose the doctors cannot have had much doubt in their own minds from the first; but he so earnestly desired to go down to Bradford that they had refrained from pronouncing a verdict till the last moment possible. Sir William Jenner and Dr. Fox now pronounced that it was impossible he could be fit to undertake such an exertion within six weeks, so he finally gave up the hope, which had evidently been becoming faint even in his own mind.

The party organization at Bradford had made many difficulties about accepting his long-declared candidature for the Central Division, and he was in constant correspondence about it with his friend and election agent, Mr. Killick. But his state was so uncertain—(for on one day he was so ill that we had to keep back his letters, as the doctors dreaded the least

excitement or effort for him, and on the next day there might be a revival, and he would dictate for an hour or two to his secretary)—that it was evidently impossible for him to carry on the discussion himself, and he recognized the necessity of leaving it in the hands of his friends. He had therefore written to Mr. Killick on October 18th.

‘DEAR MR. KILLICK,

‘As I am still an invalid and unable to come to Bradford, I think it best to say that with regard to any communication on my behalf with the Liberal Association, I desire to leave my interests in the hands of yourself and any of my friends you may wish to consult, to adopt any course which they may consider right and honourable. Provided, that in any case I go to the poll if there be a contest; and that nothing is said or done to affect my own freedom of action, or to interfere with what I conceive to be my relation to the constituency as defined in my final address to the entire borough.

‘Yours very truly,

‘W. E. FORSTER.’

On October 24th, the executive committee of the Bradford Liberal Association adopted Mr. Forster as their candidate, and on the following Tuesday their decision was unanimously confirmed at a general meeting of the Two Hundred. Having once made the decision, the feeling shown at these meetings by all sections of the party was thoroughly kind and generous. They saw that Mr. Forster was unable as heretofore to fight his own battles, and they did honour to themselves and to him by resolving for the time to sink all their former differences, and to see in him only the respected statesman, and the old and distinguished member whose representation of Bradford had lasted through storm and calm for nearly a quarter of a century. It was a decision prompted by the generous sympathy, and carried out with the cordiality and fidelity, which are never wanting in Yorkshiremen; and it brought great relief and satisfaction to him in his sick-room;—it was a comfort to him to feel that the breach with the Two Hundred was healed.

He now occupied himself in writing his address; and I remember how much I was troubled by the effort it cost him, and how sadly I felt that, though firm and distinct as ever in the statement of his opinions, there was a languor in its tone very different from the ring of spirit and energy in his former addresses.

Nearly a month had passed since our return from Norwood, and in spite of the slight improvement we had seen at first, there seemed no progress to build upon. The weather, too, was so bad in London that he could go out less and less, so the doctors advised his going to Torquay for the winter months. They would have preferred his going to the south of France, but it was quite evident that he was in no state to undertake the journey. Accordingly, on November 20th, we went down to Torquay. He bore the journey better than we had ventured to hope. 'Altogether, that arrival at the Osborne Hotel,' says his daughter in her '*Recollections*,' 'comes back to my mind rather as a bright spot, and I began to have a rush of hope that we were entering on a new and much happier stage. And, indeed, at first he was able to do much more than in London, and it did seem for a time as if he were making real progress. He drove out, and even walked a little.'

From various points in these drives we could faintly see the yellow line of the Dorsetshire cliffs, and my husband would stop the carriage and strain his eyes to look across for his beloved 'Golden Cap,' and the other well-known cliffs between Bridport and Lyme, which he had climbed about in his boyhood, and which he was never tired of pointing out to me.

The Elections were now going on, and he was watching them with the keenest interest, keeping a list day by day of the result of each election. The prospects of his own election, of course, occupied him much. Everything was going on well at Bradford: his friends, Mr. Mundella, Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Cropper, and Mr. Stansfeld had gone down to speak for him, his sons were working for him, the party was united, and he received encouraging accounts of the canvass. He wrote or dictated notes almost daily to his election agent; and, as I look them over now and see the faint and trembling signatures, they attest touchingly both the feeble physical powers and the clear and active mind, watchful over all the details as of old. They show, too, the self-control—so unflinching throughout his illness—with which he resigned himself to be passive. 'Now that my address is out,' he wrote at the beginning of the election campaign, 'I feel I *must* leave the management of the contest in the hands of my friends. It is not that I wish to save myself trouble while they are all working so hard; but no one not on the spot can form a judgment as to matters of detail and management.' And he had faithfully acted on this, abstaining not only from interference, but from allowing even to himself any anxiety over the details of management. Yet it cost him much to feel that others were

working for him and he was doing nothing. 'It is dreadfully trying for him,' I wrote at this time, 'to think that others are working so hard in his cause and he is able to take no part.'

He writes to Mr. Killick, 'The party will, as a rule, vote for me; but if there be two or three irreconcilables, I suspect we must make up our minds to do without them. What I am really anxious about is the rank and file, and *their* intentions the first two or three days' canvass ought to tell us.' . . .

'November 24th, 1885.—William Hargreaves* sends me the canvass returns made up by wards, so do not trouble to send them. I know how unreliable canvass returns generally are; but I suppose the present canvassers are much the same men as Illingworth's and mine when we coalesced against Ripley in 1880, and I cannot forget how remarkably correct they then proved. However, they are quite uncertain enough to make any relaxation of effort most unwise; and, besides, for future elections it would be a great gain to get a large majority.' . . .

The election took place on the 28th of November, and he was returned by a majority of 1543 votes. It was a long day of anxious expectation for our little party at Torquay—so strangely different in its quietness and monotony from all former election days; but I do not think he felt much doubt himself about the result. The two hours of suspense, from ten o'clock until midnight, were the most trying time, and he was getting very much exhausted. 'I shall never forget,' writes his daughter, 'the sound of the footstep on the Crescent pavement, or my rushing out to meet the telegrams on the staircase. I brought in the three telegrams, and we opened them together. Then how happy we were, and how anxious he was that the messenger should be properly paid! Before we were up next morning telegrams of congratulation came pouring in. With the telegrams about the election we received one telling us of the birth of Florence's baby; and he was so happy about Flo. "It is not often," he said to me, "that a man gets two such telegrams in twelve hours; but the last was the best." Sunday, November 29th, was a very full day. There were many letters to be written, and it was near post-time before the address of thanks was finished. In looking back, this Sunday seems to me to have been our last happy, hopeful day.'

* Mr. Hargreaves, the late cashier at Greenholme Mills, who had closely identified himself with the interests of his employers for more than forty years, had offered his valuable services to Mr. Forster as a volunteer clerk during the election, and worked night and day for the old friend and master to whom he was loyally devoted.

In these days of hope he resumed his diary for a brief time.

'*Monday, November 30th.*— . . . Went to the club to see the returns. MacIver, the Liberal, returned. The tide seems setting for the Liberals. Letters of congratulation pouring in. . . .

'*Wednesday, December 2nd.*—James Cropper defeated. I am more sorry for this than for any election.

'*Thursday, December 3rd.*—Very hard day, writing letters of thanks, many of them to ward chairmen.

'*Saturday, December 5th.*— . . . A good deal of chill all the afternoon. . . .

'*Sunday, December 6th.*—Very good night; the best I have had. Nevertheless, depressed and worse. . . . Liberals have been gaining largely through the week—a question whether small majority will be for Liberals, or Tories and Parnellites together. I hope the last.' This is the last entry in his diary.

Although he had gained considerably in strength since he came to Torquay, and had been able to be so much in the open air, some of the most serious features of his illness had remained substantially unchanged, and soon after these brighter days all was overclouded again. We could not tell whether he had overtaken himself in writing letters of thanks to those who had worked for him in Bradford—which he insisted on doing with his own hand—or whether he had taken a chill in the bitterly cold winds, but he evidently lost ground, and in a short time was attacked by acute inflammation of the liver. This was the beginning of the end, though the end was still far off, and still unforeseen by us. After this he never was able to walk out again, but when he was able to leave his bedroom could only be wheeled into the sitting-room for a few hours. Another change was that he began to suffer, for the first time in his illness, severe pain; and he was rarely afterwards free from pain in some form, borne throughout with a courage and a sweetness which those who saw him can never forget. Three times during the following months, he had sudden attacks of such a serious kind that he was hardly expected to live through the night. They were marked by a sudden and alarming rise of temperature, with oppressed breathing and stupor, but each time they passed away rapidly, and his vigorous constitution in measure rallied from them, so that they seemed to leave him in much the same state as before. He knew well the danger he had been in on these occasions, and knew well also the uncertainty

of the future; but the hope and expectation of recovery were always strong within him, and he was as little absorbed as ever with his illness.

He occupied himself, when he could, with reading; and when he was not able to do so, listened untiringly to reading aloud. He dictated many letters, often in the midst of most severe pain; and followed public affairs closely, and with the living interest of one who was looking forward to take part in them again, but was controlling himself to patience and submission until the time should come.

But in this brief outline I have anticipated the progress of his illness, and must now return to the early part of December.

Our daughter had left us immediately after the election, to spend a few days with her sister in London, and when she returned on December 10th, she found her father in a very different state from when she went away.

On the 14th, Mr. Loring, who throughout his illness had been like a son to him in his devoted and thoughtful helpfulness, came down for a week, and they worked together every day.

On December 17th, the *Pall Mall* produced the outline of Mr. Gladstone's supposed Home Rule Scheme, and the Central News immediately telegraphed to him to ask him to telegraph back his views at length on the subject. He would not do this; replying, that while obliged for the opportunity offered of expressing his views on the Irish Question, he was not at present inclined to avail himself of it. This reply was interpreted in some quarters to mean that he was hesitating in his opinion; a few days later, therefore, he wrote a letter to the *Daily News*, saying explicitly that he believed a Parliament in Dublin would be fraught with danger to both England and Ireland. It was a relief to him to feel that he had spoken out and made his position clearly understood.

From my 'Notes.'—*Wednesday, December 23rd.* His letter appeared in the *Daily News* and *Standard*. The North letters were very late; among them was one from Mr. Gladstone congratulating him on Bradford and improved health, and mentioning having seen with pleasure a notice of a letter from him "which had seemed very wise." I took him the letters at a favourable time in the afternoon; he read them, and returned quietly to his book; but later on, though in severe pain, he dictated to me without a trace of effort or excitement a letter of sympathy to Mr. S—— of Bradford, who had met with an accident, and his reply to Mr. Gladstone.'

‘MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

‘Excuse my dictating to my wife my thanks for your most kind letter, but I am kept in bed to-day. The fact is I am much stronger than I was, but my liver gives me a great deal of trouble, and just now I have rather a sharp attack of pain, which, however, I hope the doctor will get the better of in a day or two.

‘I fear your kind letter must have been written on the perusal of an incorrect letter of mine to the Central News Association, which I felt that I ought to set right in a letter to the *Daily News*.

‘This Irish matter is indeed most full of difficulties, and I wish to say that I have looked at Home Rule with a most earnest endeavour to form an impartial judgment. I have employed hours, I may say days, in overhauling my previous views, but I cannot come to any other conclusion than the one I gave in the letter I have mentioned.

‘Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone, to remain

‘Yours most sincerely,

‘W. E. FORSTER.’

The ‘Notes,’ continued.—‘He was awake most of the night. When I went in about a quarter past three, I heard him half repeating poetry, half sighing, and almost groaning with the pain. . . . He was looking feverish and oppressed, but very patient. When I went in about eight o’clock I found he had slept little; however, all seemed less oppressive with morning light. As he could not see the sunrise from where he lay, we moved the pier-glass so that he saw it in that, which he enjoyed. He said he thought the pain was “rather less”—as he always will say, if he can. . . . I spoke of it being a sad Christmas for us. . . . He would not let me call it a *sad* Christmas: “It is a better Christmas than any we have had,” he said; “I would not have it different for anything.”’

‘It was quite early on Tuesday morning, December 29th,’ writes his daughter in her *‘Recollections,’* ‘that he was taken so very ill, and that we were called to him. He was very feverish, and his breathing laboured, and he seemed strangely far away from us; and, as we knelt there, we thought he was going from us then. . . . As it began to be light the breathing became more natural, and he sank into a quiet sleep. I went into the sitting-room. The sun was just rising over Torbay. The sea itself was grey and stormy, but over Berry Head was a line of golden light, and I thought of the river with the Celestial City shining beyond it.

‘When the doctors came in the morning for the second time he was much better, and in the afternoon he was quite like himself, knowing nothing of what had passed in the night. He was exceedingly anxious to get his election returns signed, and Mr. Speir came in and witnessed them. We could not keep the papers from him with their paragraphs about his danger, and, besides, we had sent for Edward, and Robin and Flo were coming, so gradually he learnt how ill he had been in the night. He was very much interested, and questioned the nurse and us very closely, only as calmly as if it had been about some one else’s illness.

‘On December 31st we were made anxious by his extreme wakefulness all the morning, and we wanted him very much to be still and try and get a little sleep. At last Edward read him to sleep, and I went in and took Edward’s place. By-and-by he woke, and asked what day it was. I told him New Year’s Eve. After a time he began to pray out loud. There was something about his not being moved either “by the sharpness of pain or by the fear of death,” but even directly afterwards I could not recall the exact words, nothing but the solemn general impression. After a pause, he said, “I have tried to serve my country.” Almost directly afterwards we were interrupted, and he sent for Edward again, and asked him what he meant to do about his boys. He was pleased about Del’s being meant for a sailor, and said, “If I do not get better, you must go to Lord George Hamilton, or, if our people are in, to Sir Thomas Brassey, and tell him it was my dying wish that Del should have a nomination.” It was at this time, too, that he told Edward of his wish to be buried at Burley.’

From my ‘Notes.’—‘I went into my husband’s room at five o’clock this morning, and found him awake; he had had a wakeful night. I asked if I should repeat some hymns to soothe him to sleep; he said he was going to ask me. After I had repeated several, he asked me to kneel down. I knelt close beside him, and he began to pray in a trembling solemn voice, like one speaking his real thoughts to One unseen. The whole burden and heart of it was, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” I can only put down fragments. . . . Towards the end he prayed, “Whether Thou art pleased to raise me up and enable me to serve my country again, or whether my work in Parliament is to be closed, help me to try and serve my country, or help me to bear it.” . . . All through there was the same solemn trembling earnestness of the tones, the grave simple language perfectly free from excitement, or from being hurried

by emotion into a single unreal word—the strong reason and the humble spirit both laid open before the God to whom he spoke, and the burden still was “Lead me, and give me light.”

‘He had an all but sleepless night. I went in several times, helping to arrange his pillows, etc., as he was very uneasy and could not be made comfortable by any means. Soon after eight he asked me to read “one of those grand hymns about the glories of God in His works.” I proposed the 104th Psalm, but he took the Bible, and turned over the Psalms to the 147th and 148th, which we read.’ ‘Ever since his attack, letters and telegrams of inquiry had come pouring in. I was with him about one o’clock, reading letters full of affection and sorrow and anxiety for him. He was touched and pleased, and, when I had done, he said, “I did not know people cared about me so much.”’

‘He had a good deal of quiet sleep in the night without opiates. When I went into his room he seemed much refreshed. I asked if I should repeat one or two of the hymns I knew he liked, instead of reading a Psalm, and began to repeat “God moves in a mysterious way.” He said he would try to say it, and he repeated it slowly in his beautiful deep voice. . . . Then he repeated, “This world I deem,”* which he had been too ill to do since his last attack; then murmured in parts, “Ye are indeed our pillar fires.”†

‘*January 5th.*—He was very low this morning. I reminded him of his having said at Norwood that we had had some very blessed times together. “And so we have,—worth all the illness.”

‘On the evening of January 6th he sat up in his chair again, for the first time since December 22nd.’

During this time of severe pain and entire helplessness, his courage and patience were unflinching. My sister, Miss Arnold, who had been with us during most of that time, wrote afterwards, ‘Never shall I forget his uncomplaining sweetness as he lay hour after hour at Torquay, unable to move even from side to side because of the pain. I am thankful he has had some better nights since.’ During this depth of illness he had been obliged to give up reading to himself, but he liked to be constantly read to. One of our books was the last volume of Macaulay’s History, which always chained his interest.

* A hymn by Whytehead, which had always been a great favourite of his.

† From a poem by Henry Vaughan, beginning “Joy of my life, while left me here, And still my Love!” He was a great admirer of Henry Vaughan, and would often read or repeat his poems as his contribution to the “Sunday evening repetitions” in old days at Fox How.

His daughter mentions that, on January 11th, 'Dr. Clay came over again from Plymouth in consultation with Dr. Huxley. The moment he was gone, we heard father asking for some one to read to him—he asked not a single question, made no allusion to the doctors' visit, but plunged straight into Macaulay.'

The 'Notes,' continued.—'Friday, January 8th. My beloved husband had a very sleepless night. In the early morning he asked for me. . . . He soon began to repeat in his slow deep tones the Epiphany hymn of Northrepps Cottage, "Star of the East, whose beacon light," going back on the lines again and again if he was not sure he was correct. Immediately afterwards, in a low but steady voice, he began to pray for Ireland and for this country with great earnestness and fulness.

'January 12th.—To-day he has been much better, talking a good deal with his old humorous turns. . . . He asked what literary resources we had, and Frances enumerated our books. We talked of Sir Henry Taylor's autobiography, and he gave recollections of him at the Colonial Office, and how they were opposed to each other about Governor Eyre. Then about Governor Storke, and his famous "Perfect tranquillity reigns," and other anecdotes about him. Apropos of chivalrous devotion to women, he quoted "The bloody vest," to illustrate the difference between true and false chivalry. . . . He talked with interest of what the position of women really was in the Middle Ages. . . . Altogether he seemed more at ease physically, and more like himself in conversation than he had been for a long time. Afterwards he had the London papers, and read them to himself, quite exclaiming with interest at one or two things about Parliamentary changes.

'Just before his lunch he said he would have the blind drawn up. He looked across at the Brixham shore, and said: "That forbidden land! When we came down here I thought I should soon be well enough to walk from Brixham to Berry Head." There was scarcely even sadness in his voice as he spoke of his often disappointed hopes.

'This morning I was reading in St. Luke. I read part of the tenth chapter, and stopped at the parable of the Good Samaritan. He asked me to read it. To how very many, helpless and unfortunate, and often of little desert, has my dearest husband been a good Samaritan,—looking to nothing but their need, perfectly unweariable in helping them again and again, and yet again—however hopeless the task.

'January 15th.—This afternoon I read him a letter I had had from Mr. Tuke, in which he said that he thought

Mr. Forster would like to know that in the Friends' Meeting for Sufferings his recovery had been earnestly prayed for. My beloved husband was greatly moved. "The Church of my fathers has not forgotten me!" he said, bursting into tears. He did not recover his usual calmness for some time.'

On the 13th, our son was obliged to return home, and his father consulted him whether he ought to resign his seat. Edward satisfied him that it would be only a matter of form if he did offer his resignation, for that his constituents would certainly not accept it. He agreed to do nothing, at least till the Easter recess, and after this never spoke of the matter again. His allusion to the Easter recess in this conversation showed the indomitable hopefulness about his final recovery, which the doctors had all along considered one of the best of his chances of struggling through. His hope and vital energy seemed always to battle against the pressure of disease, and in spite of years of hard and exciting work, his constitution was still so strong that those who watched him could hardly help sharing his hopefulness.

The month went on, amid frequent alterations in his state. Sometimes he was able to be wheeled into the sitting-room for a few hours, but often he was only able to sit up for an hour in his bedroom. He did not often talk of the politics of the hour, but even when suffering most from pain and languor, he continued to follow public events with close interest, especially the many rumours about Mr. Gladstone's expected declaration for Home Rule. In a letter dictated to Mr. Goschen, on January 15th, he says:—

'I believe it will be impossible for me to take part in any debate, but I have followed the Irish news with intense interest, and it is one of the things one has to try to bear patiently to be forced to be quiet during this crisis.' After speaking of the rumours respecting Mr. Gladstone's policy, he continues, 'Let me tell you, privately, what seems to me, as an old Irish administrator, our weak point;—there will be some, though only a few, cases of hard evictions: I had some such cases, and then I comforted myself with the belief that the Land Act would stop them: but we must consider how they can be stopped under present circumstances.'

A few weeks later on, February 11th, he wrote again to Mr. Goschen: 'I am most glad to get your letter, and should be still more glad if I could get full talk with you. Had I been in the House, I should have been inclined to speak after Gladstone in the debate on the Address, strongly protesting against reticence on his part, especially in its unfairness to

the police, who are left in ignorance as to who their masters will be.

‘The case, however, now is different. Arguing against Home Rule without knowing his plan is like arguing for an abstract resolution, and will not convince the Gladstonites. Our chance of getting back any of them in Parliament or the country depends on our being able to expose the plan itself. My notion, then, would be a strong protest against delay on the first debate, if he does not—as I suppose he will not—disclose his Irish plan on the first declaration of his general policy; but to postpone actual war, until we get the plan itself.’

Among the letters which gave him pleasure at this time were some telling him of the release of a young man who had been imprisoned in Australia for a crime of which there was reason to believe he was innocent. Ever since his case was brought to my husband’s knowledge, several years ago, he had been unwearied in his efforts to obtain his release, and now rejoiced to hear that his innocence had been at last proved, and that he had returned home. He wrote to the young man in reply to a grateful letter from him:—

‘Torquay, January 22nd.

‘DEAR ———,

‘I have been so ill that I have not felt myself able earlier to answer your note. I am very glad that you have been restored to your parents, and I am still more glad, if possible, that your innocence has been publicly proved.

‘Your experience has been a very bitter one, but it has not been altogether a loss. It must have called out all the manliness in your character, and, by God’s help, and under His guidance, you may become an honour and comfort to your parents, doing good to others, and striving with good hope to be successful in working for yourself.

‘May this be your future, is the earnest hope of your sincere friend,

‘W. E. FORSTER.’

The mother wrote to me: ‘I feel towards him gratitude and love too deep for words. May God grant him a return to health; his life is a noble one—doing good to all, and to *mine*.’

Whenever he was well enough he enjoyed seeing the friends who occasionally came to Torquay; and our kind

neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Speir and Canon Scott Holland, used to let us send word to them whenever we thought a visitor would be cheering for him, so that they could come in at the right moment. In a letter, written after his death, Canon Scott Holland recalls the impression made upon him in these visits. After speaking of 'those few short interviews, which had been their whole acquaintance,' he says: 'And now every reference to him, every record of him, is changed from what it would have been, from my clear memory of that sick-room at Torquay, and of those honest and pure grey-blue eyes, and of that dignified, honourable kindness which no sickness could disfigure or discredit. It was a sight full of tenderness and of worth, and I shall always treasure it among my most valued and sacred memories.'

The account of our stay at Torquay may be concluded by a few extracts from the '*Recollections*' written for me by our daughter, which have been already frequently quoted.

'On January 26th, Edith came to us for a month with baby. Do you not remember how little Trev used to lie kicking and smiling on the bed, or sometimes sitting up close beside him with his baby hands entwined round his grandfather's long thin fingers? . . . When people sent him flowers now, he was so courteous in expressing his pleasure and in his care to have them always in his sight. Canon Bell sent him some snowdrops and violets, and he dictated such a pretty note of thanks, saying how the sight of them had recalled his rides in childhood through the Dorsetshire lanes in search of wild flowers.

'On February 2nd, Sir William Jenner came down for the night to see him, and to give us an opinion as to the safety of his being moved to London. He spoke much more hopefully than the other doctors, and when he went away he left me feeling more cheered than I had been for months past; but it was only for a few days.

'On February 9th, Mr. MacIver called, and father was much interested in all he had to say about Burmah. It had been a decidedly good day; but at night there was another of those attacks, such as he had had in December. It was terribly alarming, and yet I don't think that through it all he ever gave me the impression of being so hopelessly ill, or so far away out of our reach. Towards morning the fever subsided, and he fell into a natural sleep. . . . All the next day he was quite brilliant in his talk about all manner of things. How he laughed over Edith's and my troubles in the night with the baby and the alarm, and how he entered into

“Pepys’s Diary.” The change was so sudden and unnatural that it half frightened us, and yet it was difficult not to feel a thrill of hope. The next day, February 11th, he had fallen back into his old languid state. . . . You were very anxious now that we should get back to London, as Sir William Jenner had sanctioned the journey. I don’t think he wished it strongly himself; but he quite acquiesced in the move, and took an interest in all the preparations. On February 25th, we left Torquay, and got back safely to London. He bore the journey better than we had dared to hope. He was pleased and encouraged at this, and by the thoughtful way in which all had been planned, and by the kindness and courtesy of all the railway officials; and he was most anxious that every one concerned should get his due measure of thanks. Just when we got back to London we heard of the subscription that was being raised in the Reform Club for a picture of him. This pleased him very much. We fell back into very much the same ways as before we went to Torquay. . . . Mr. Loring came up to his room in the morning, and he got through some work with him. In the afternoon he generally had visitors. . . . Day after day, now, he seemed to remain at much the same stage, sometimes seeming brighter, and sometimes more languid; but not making any real progress.’

There is very little more to be told, but a few more passages from my ‘Notes’ may still be given. ‘*March 1st, 80, Eccleston Square.*—To-day he saw Mr. Tuke, who talked about emigration for the unemployed, and the large scale on which he thought this relief might be needed for the future. W. talked more than usual. Evidently from his grasp of the whole difficulty, he must have been turning it over in his mind. He spoke of the Meeting for Sufferings offering prayer for him, and hoped they knew how deeply he had felt it.’ . . .

My sister, Mrs. Cropper, and her husband, had come in on Sunday afternoon. ‘He wanted them to come up to his bedroom, and said, if they did not mind it, he should like us to have the service together. We read together the Psalms and lessons, and some collects. At the verse “He gave their land to be an heritage,” etc., W. said, “How many cruel and wicked robberies have been justified by that verse!”’

Ireland was still to have some of his last thoughts. ‘On *March 13th,*’ writes his daughter, ‘I remember seeing him talking to Lord Selborne. He was sitting in his arm-chair in his bedroom. The conversation was about Ireland, and when I went in, he was talking with so much of his old force and vigour that it startled me; and I remember thinking that

no one who saw him at that moment would guess how ill he was.

On the 17th, his daughter, Mrs. O'Brien, sent him, as she had been used to do, a bunch of shamrock for St. Patrick's Day. He was too ill in the morning to notice it; but when I took it to him later, he was greatly pleased, and had it placed by his bedside. His friend Mr. Tuke had gone over to Ireland to distribute relief in the shape of food and seed potatoes in the most distressed districts. Such a work recalled to my husband the similar work in which, as a young man, he and Mr. Tuke had been engaged in the same districts in the terrible famine years, and he was anxious about some of the islands he had visited then, and where he knew the poverty now to be specially grievous. On March 24th, I wrote for him to Mr. Tuke, sending a subscription, with a request that it might, if possible, be applied to the relief of Boffin, one of the poorest and most inaccessible of the islands. It was his last work for Ireland, and I am not sure that he was ever able to hear Mr. Tuke's letter in reply, telling him that food had been already sent.

From my 'Notes.'—*March 27th.* Last Sunday afternoon, rather late, when he seemed tired and low, I asked him if he would read me some of Matt's poetry. He brightened up, said he should like it, and read his favourite poem, "The Future," and then "The Forsaken Merman." All through his illness nothing seemed more often to cheer him if he was low or weary than to read or repeat poetry, and the quantity that he knew by heart used to astonish me—the old stores of his youth coming back to his memory. He beguiled many sleepless hours of the night by repeating pages of "Marmion" or the "Lay," fragments of old ballads, etc. His fondness for some of Henry Vaughan's poems has already been mentioned; these and a number of the old well-known hymns, which had doubtless been favourites at Northrepps and the Cottage, he used often to repeat. At Torquay he used frequently to read poetry to us. One day, I remember, when he was very unequal to the exertion, he read through Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality," enjoying it so much that he would not give it up.

The last week of March is marked in my 'Notes' as 'a good week' with him, but it was the last gleam. 'On Tuesday, the 23rd, Sir William Jenner came, and found the nervous vitality much higher than he had seen it at all. On Wednesday, he went out in a bath chair—the first time for three months that he had breathed the air. He was eager for it and much enjoyed it, and was able to see several people that afternoon, and was not tired. It was altogether a good week with him;

he talked more readily and brightly, so like himself—often in half-playful ways. Bevan Braithwaite came by invitation about half-past five on Sunday evening. He prayed with us.’

F’s ‘Recollections.’—‘April 2nd. He seemed really better. The coachman had just brought the horses up from Wharfe-side, and you and he went for a drive, which he enjoyed. On coming in, he stopped in the hall before he was carried upstairs, and turned round to call out a message of thanks to Morris for having got ready so quickly. After lunch he wrote some letters himself, and in the afternoon talked for some time with interest to Mrs. Jeune, not the least as if he were tired. After he had gone to bed I read to him, and when I went back to him after dinner he asked me to read again, and we went on till bedtime.’

From my ‘Notes.’—‘The last thing, I went to him to have our prayer together. I said the collect for “pardon and peace;” . . . the last word I heard from him till I was called to him in the morning was his grave and earnest “Amen.” He seemed quiet in his room all night. I looked in before six, but did not go in, as I was not quite sure from his breathing that he was asleep.’

F’s ‘Recollections.’—‘April 3rd. At half-past eight, another attack like the Torquay ones came on. All that day the fever lasted; he was not exactly unconscious, but he lay speaking little and taking very little notice. On Sunday morning, April 4th, we told him that Edward had come. He was pleased, and was anxious for him to come upstairs at once. . . Oakeley came to him about one o’clock, and said, taking his hand, “My beloved father.” He knew him.

‘In the afternoon there was more pain, and he wandered a good deal. Towards evening he was very restless. . . . The fever continued all night. Early on Monday morning (April 5th) you came to me, and told me it was just the same. . . . We went back to his room. We could not tell how far he was conscious, but how emphatically he assented when once you asked him if he knew that it was his wife’s arm that was supporting him. The quick and painful breathing continued for several hours, until a few minutes before the end. Then the breaths came slower and softer, till the last was hardly a sigh, and slowly and gently he passed away out of our reach.’”

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

MR. FORSTER'S death touched the public keenly. That he should have died at such a time, when a great crisis in our national history had been reached, and when a mighty change was coming over the minds of a large section of the English people on the subject of our policy with regard to Ireland, seemed to intensify the mourning for his loss. It was indeed strange that he who had so long insisted, almost alone among English politicians of the first rank, upon the right of independent judgment in political affairs, upon the duty of subordinating even party loyalty to personal conviction, should have been removed at the very moment when those views suddenly became widely and generally popular. Yet he cannot be accounted unhappy in the moment of his death. The public sympathy had been deeply stirred by his long illness, and by his inability to take any personal part in the general election. Residents in Bradford and Leeds can bear witness to the fact that whilst the contest was being fought out in the Central Division of the former town, one question which eclipsed all others in its interest was that of Mr. Forster's probable fate at the ballot. On the Saturday night, described in the previous chapter, on which the election for Central Bradford was decided, there was not a spot in Yorkshire where politicians congregated, where men did not wait with breathless anxiety for the news; and when it came, and it was found that Mr. Forster, absent and ill, had triumphed over the combined forces of Toryism and Parnellism, the shouts of exultation which were raised and the emotion which was displayed, showed how strong was the feeling of affection which he had inspired in the hearts of his neighbours, and how profound had been their anxiety lest a dishonouring blow might be struck at him whilst he lay helpless on a sick-bed.

The feeling which was shown to so marked a degree in

Yorkshire at the time of the Bradford election, extended more or less throughout the country. Generous Englishmen of every party, including men to whom he had been opposed in politics throughout his life, were moved by the inability of one who had so long been ever in the front of the fight, to take even the slightest part in a contest which interested him so deeply. His death, which put an end to hopes widely entertained by the outside world of his speedy return to public life, came as a shock upon the nation. From every quarter tributes of honour and respect were paid to his memory. The comments of the press upon his career were marked by an ample recognition of the strength and purity of his character, of his commanding abilities, his inexhaustible energy and his deep-rooted patriotism. It was not in England only that this testimony was borne. The leading part which he had taken in connection with the great question of the federation of the empire had given him a new title to honour and esteem in the colonies, and from every quarter of the world, wherever the British flag flies, came expressions of sorrow at his death, and acknowledgments of the greatness of the loss which had fallen upon the empire.

The private utterances of sympathy and grief which reached his wife and family came literally from every class in the nation, and were marked by an unmistakable warmth and genuineness of feeling. One only can be quoted here. The Queen wrote to Mrs. Forster as follows:—

“Windsor Castle, April 7th, 1886.

“DEAR MRS. FORSTER,

“I purposely delayed writing at once to you, not wishing to intrude on your overwhelming grief for the loss of such a husband, so good and so devoted, fearing to add to the weight of your affliction; but to-day I trust I may venture to express not only the deep sympathy I feel for you, but also the true and sincere concern I feel at the loss of one for whom I had the greatest regard and respect, and who served his Queen and country bravely, truly, and loyally. We can ill afford to lose so honest, so unselfish and courageous a statesman as he was, in these days, and his public loss is very great.

“But I ought not to speak of such feelings when I think of you, from whom the light and joy of your life has been taken. Still I think that the appreciation of those we have lost by others, and by the Sovereign he served so well, is soothing to the bleeding heart.

“My daughter Beatrice feels deeply for you, and shares

my sorrow at dear Mr. Forster's loss. Pray express my sympathy to your children; and praying that God may give you peace and strength to bear up,

“ Believe me, always,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ VICTORIA R. AND I.’

A suggestion in the *Times* that a funeral service should be held in Westminster Abbey was immediately adopted. The service was held on Friday, April 9th, and was attended by a vast throng of his old political associates, members of the public services, representatives of the colonies, personal friends, and the general public. The chiefs of both political parties met in the abbey to mourn the loss of one who had not merely written his name in the history of his country, but secured a place in the hearts of his contemporaries. Imposing as the abbey service was, however, it could not vie with the scene which was witnessed on the following day, Saturday, April 10th, when Forster's body was laid to rest in the burial-ground at Burley, hard by the home he had loved so passionately, and the little community which had learned to trust him as a friend long before the world had heard of him as a statesman. It was a wild winter's day, and the beautiful Wharfe valley wore an aspect of desolation that harmonized well with the thoughts of the mourners. Thousands of men and women from Bradford, Leeds, and the neighbouring towns, where his name had so long been as a household word, joined the people of Burley and the other villages of Wharfedale in following him to the grave. No such demonstration of public grief had ever before been witnessed in the valley; and those who mingled with that throng of mourners quickly learned that it was not the politician, but the man, who filled the thoughts of all. Yesterday, with the stately service at Westminster, had been for the statesman: to-day, with its simple Quaker funeral in the hillside burial-ground, witnessed the last farewell to the friend and neighbour, who had risen high in the councils of the State, but whose heart had remained unaffected by all the changes of fortune; who had never varied in his affection for the friends of his youth, or in his bearing towards the humblest of those among whom his lot was cast; whose temper had not been soured by trials, nor his sympathies narrowed by the growth of years; whose spirit had remained young whilst his head grew grey; and the horizon of whose mental vision had seemed ever to grow wider and brighter as he drew nearer to the end of life. If heartfelt love and sorrow furnish the

highest tribute to the dead, then indeed may Mr. Forster's friends feel that he was honoured above most.

Many marks of the public regard for his labours have been given since his death. At Bradford and in London, his memory is to be perpetuated by statues erected in public places; whilst in Westminster Abbey a medallion, placed close to the monument of his uncle, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, with whom his first entrance upon public work is associated, secures for his name a place in our noblest national shrine. But if any visible and tangible memorial of the life of such a man as Mr. Forster were needed to preserve his name from oblivion, it would be found, not in carven marble or moulded bronze, but in the school-houses which, rising in every town and village in the land he loved so well, bear witness to the success of the Education Act, of which he was the author, and in which it was his happy lot to see the realization of the cherished aspirations of his youth.

"Half the people in the village want to die that they may be buried there," were the words spoken by one of Forster's humble village friends immediately after his death, in reference to the hillside burial-ground where he is laid; and beside this outburst of genuine feeling on the part of those who knew him best, and who judged him for what he was and what he did, it would be superfluous to say more of the place which he had won in the hearts of those around him.

The following lines, touchingly suggestive of the links by which Forster's labours and his father's were bound together, appeared immediately after his death in *The Friend* :—

THE TWO FUNERALS.

WILLIAM FORSTER and W. E. FORSTER.

(*Obit.* 27 i., 1854.)

(*Obit.* 5 iv., 1886.)

In Tennessee, across the wide Atlantic,
 There rests the clay
 Of one who bore the image of his Master—
 Long passed away.

A lonely grave, with few to stand beside it
 To shed a tear,
 Although to the oppressed of many a nation
 His name was dear.

Beneath that massive form a heart was bleeding
 For all earth's woe,
 Till the strained tension burst the clay-built dwelling
 And laid it low.

But angels, hovering o'er on snow-white pinions,
 Their loved to greet,
 Bore the freed soul with joyful hallelujahs
 To Christ's own feet.

* * * * *

In England's stately, world-renowned Walhalla,
 A mournful train
 Of great and noble meet, while—slowly—slowly—
 A dirge-like strain—

A funeral anthem in the grand old Abbey,
 Far-off, yet near,
 Floats on the air. Hush! stand ye all uncovered,—
 Room for the bier!

Silence—deep silence—for the dead is coming
 In deathly state.
 Ah! what is *life*? Before that kingly sceptre
 Earth's proudest wait.

Yet speak those floral wreaths of resurrection—
 Not born to die;
 The mortal perishes, but the immortal
 Mounts up on high.

The fixed heroic aim, the will unswerving,
 True to the line,
 Not earth-born, but a glorious emanation
 Of the divine.

These cannot pass away, and still thou livest
 Among thy peers,
 Thy name a banner-cry to all the noble
 Through coming years.

* * * * *

"Dust unto dust." Mid nature's lonely wildness
 A kindred band
 Around a simple grave in his own Wharfedale
 In silence stand.

Make way—make way, and let the long procession
 Pass on—pass on;
 One of yourselves, ye toiling sons of England,
 To rest has gone.

One of yourselves, your ever-honoured Master;
 Yet more—your *Friend*;
 Yes, mourn ye may, ye will not find his fellow
 Till time shall end.

But lift your thoughts above this narrow casket,
 He is not there—
 Of all Eternity's untold resources
 The chosen heir!

And meet it is with tears that praise should mingle ;
On bended knee,
Hearts bowed with anguish raise their grateful tribute,
O Lord, to Thee ;

Calling, from Time's brief span, thy servant higher,
To endless days,
Where, sire with son, in wider fields of service,
Blend work with praise.

M. E. B.

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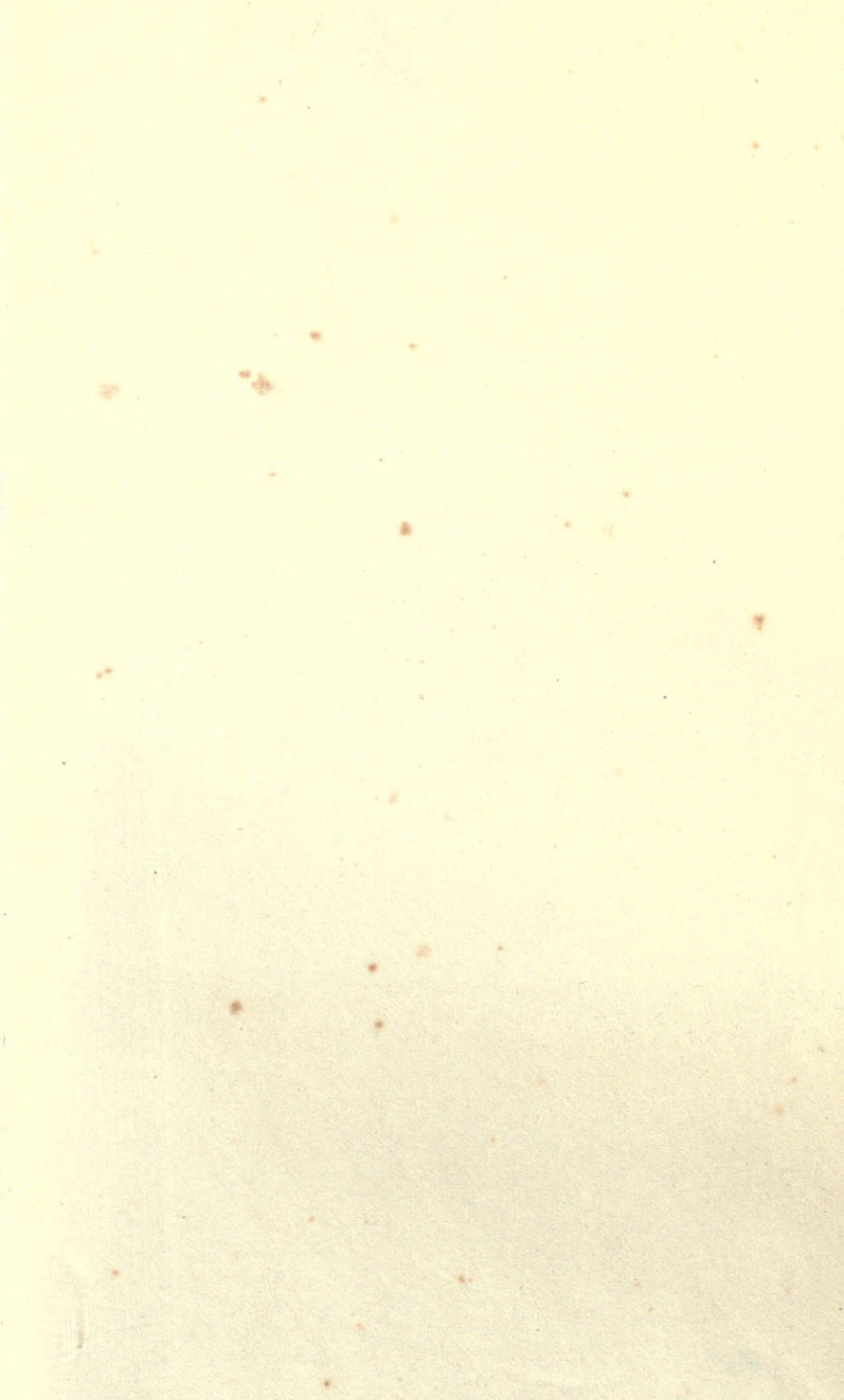
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